

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN COUNSELORS' CAUSAL ATTRIBUTIONS FOR  
PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES: SEX, SEX ROLE IDENTITIES AND LEVELS  
OF SELF-ESTEEM

By

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by

Mindy S. Hersh

This dissertation would not  
have been possible if  
not for my parents

ARTIE AND HENY HERSH

to whom I dedicate this work

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of counselors' sex, sex role identities, and levels of agentic self-esteem on their causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes. Agentic self-esteem refers to that dimension of self-esteem concerned with ability and performance. The causal attributions investigated were ability, typical effort, interest in task, immediate effort, mood, supervisor, luck, task ease, and help from others.

The instruments were mailed to 600 members of the American Mental Health Counselors Association. The Bem Sex Role Inventory was used to assess counselors' sex role identities, the Performance Self-Esteem Scale was used to assess counselors' levels of agentic self-esteem, and the Causal Attribution Scale was used to assess counselors' causal attributions for self-reported performance outcomes. The final sample

included 62 male counselors and 65 female counselors. One-way analyses of variance were used to analyze the data.

The results of the data analyses indicate that differences did not exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful outcomes when compared by sex. The results also show that differences did exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Undifferentiated sex-typed counselors were less likely than the androgynous, masculine, and feminine sex-typed counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort.

The results further indicate that differences did exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Lower level agentic self-esteem counselors were less likely than the higher level agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort and ability. The results also show that differences did not exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex.

The results of the data analyses reveal that differences did not exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Finally, the results indicate that differences did exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Higher level agentic self-esteem counselors were less likely than the lower level agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their unsuccessful outcomes to their immediate effort.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

Differences in the achievement behaviors of men and women have been well documented. The attributional model of achievement behavior has been used extensively to explain these differences in terms of corresponding differences in causal attributions assigned to performance outcomes (Teglasi, 1977). The attributional model assumes that following success or failure at an achievement task, outcome causality is attributed to some combination of the following factors: ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. These four factors can be conceptualized along two dimensions: locus of causality which classifies the factor as internal or external to the individual, and degree of stability which refers to the factor's stability over time (Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest, & Rosenbaum, 1971).

In spite of the substantial body of literature produced by attribution research, a consensus concerning sex differences in achievement attributions has not been reached. The problem as commonly recognized by researchers is the inconsistency in findings across investigations (Sohn, 1982). Some studies have found that women tend to be more external than males in their attributions for both success and failure outcomes (Feather, 1969; Simon & Feather 1973). Other studies report that females but not males have self-derogatory attributional

patterns where they accept responsibility for failure outcomes but attribute success to external and unstable sources (Nicholls, 1975). Still other studies have found no sex differences at all in attribution patterns (Sohn, 1982).

Two explanations for the inconsistencies in attribution literature have been offered. The first explanation addresses the problem of viewing men and women as homogeneous groups. Research separating subjects into nonhomogeneous groupings is needed to investigate the impact of individual differences among men and women on causal attributions (McHugh, Frieze, & Hanusa, 1982). The attribution literature suggests examining differences in sex role identity and self-esteem may contribute to determining the effect of individual differences on patterns of causality (Brewer & Blum, 1978; Levine, Gillman, & Reis, 1982).

Sex role identities are determined by the extent to which persons conceptualize their own degree of masculinity and femininity. These masculine and feminine definitions exert real societal pressures upon men and women to behave in specifically prescribed ways. The need to keep behavior consistent with these internalized sex role definitions is identified as a powerful motivational force (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Kagan, 1964; Kohlberg, 1966). The traditional feminine sex role embraces many personality characteristics that generally conflict with achievement such as nonassertiveness, avoidance of competition, and dependency. The traditional masculine sex role includes characteristics most often associated with achievement such as aggression, independence and a willingness to take risks (Bem, 1974; Stein & Bailey, 1973).

Changes in social, cultural, and economic norms are resulting in the acceptance of new interpretations of appropriate behaviors for men and women. The value of the traditional sex role dichotomy is being questioned and the concept of androgyny, the blending of both masculine and feminine characteristics, seriously examined. Consequently, increasing numbers of men and women are becoming less sex-typed in their sex role identifications. Where wide gaps once existed in behaviors exhibited by the sexes, women are now reported as possessing many of the same characteristics as men including assertiveness and Machiavellianism (Wertheim, Widom, & Wortzel, 1978). In view of these changes, the validity of many global statements concerning men and women must be questioned.

The literature also suggests level of self-esteem may affect causal attributions (Fitch, 1970; Levine et al., 1982). Self-esteem has traditionally been conceptualized as a unidimensional factor constant across all aspects of the self (Stake, 1981). More recently, the view of self-esteem as unifactorial is being challenged by researchers that argue self-esteem cannot be defined by a single measure (Stake, 1981). Consequently, theories examining self-esteem as a multidimensional construct are achieving acceptance.

Stake (1979) has developed a self-esteem scale that measures the "agentic" dimension of self-esteem. The term agentic, derived from Bakan's (1966) model of orientations toward life, refers to that aspect of self-esteem concerned with ability and performance. Researchers argue that a measure of agentic self-esteem should predict achievement behavior more accurately than a global measure (Franks & Marolla, 1976). However, research investigating the relationship between self-esteem and

attributions for achievement outcomes relies solely on global self-esteem measures (Fitch, 1970; Levine et al., 1982). In order to achieve a more precise assessment of the effect of self-esteem on causal attributions, this study considered individual differences in the agentic dimension of self-esteem.

Failure to consider the effects of situational determinants on attributions may also account for the inconsistencies found in attribution research. Situational variables such as the nature of the task itself have not been adequately investigated. Relationships between qualitative characteristics of performance tasks and the subsequent causal attributions assigned to task outcomes should be examined. Travis, Burnett-Doering, and Reid (1982) suggest investigating this relationship by classifying recalled success and failure experiences according to the type of experiences reported, then examining the attributional factors assigned causality for these performance outcomes.

Other situational variables, such as the context in which the task is performed, must also be considered. The vast majority of attribution studies examine student populations' causal attributions for the outcomes of controlled laboratory tasks. Few studies have been conducted investigating attribution patterns in real life achievement settings such as the workplace. Those studies that have been conducted in the field concentrate on occupations that are nontraditional for women such as the management profession (Deaux, 1979).

Just as it is necessary to extend attribution research further into real life settings, it is important not to limit these investigations to nontraditional occupations. The traditional-



nontraditional dichotomy may be significant as women choosing traditional career paths have been shown to differ from women choosing nontraditional career paths on a variety of dimensions (Karman, 1972; Tangri, 1972). Traditional occupations are defined as those where over 50 percent of the workers are women (Tangri, 1972). Occupations falling into the traditional category include teaching, nursing, secretarial work, and counseling (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1981). This investigation focused on men and women in the counseling profession.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of counselors' sex, sex role identities, and levels of agentic self-esteem on their causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes.

#### Need for the Study

A commonality throughout attribution literature is the belief that systematic differences in men's and women's causal attributions may explain why women are not equaling men in the work force, politics, and other fields traditionally associated with achievement (Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble, & Zellman, 1978b). Major changes in society's social and economic structures are making the identification of factors contributing to women's low achievement status increasingly important.

Women are entering and re-entering the labor force in unprecedented numbers accounting for 42.8 percent of all workers. However, whereas 20 years ago women sought employment largely for self-fulfillment purposes, today's women are seeking employment out of economic necessity (National Commission on Working Women, 1981).

Forty-three percent of employed women are single, widowed, divorced, or separated. Twenty-three percent are married to men earning incomes of less than \$17,000 a year. Although economic need is the primary motivating factor for obtaining employment, the majority of working women continue to be concentrated in low paying and often dead-end jobs. Average full time women workers earn 59.6¢ to every dollar earned by male full time workers (National Commission on Working Women, 1981).

If attribution research is to shed light upon the problem of female underachievement it must broaden its scope. Recent research indicates that the assignment of outcome causality is not limited to the four factors identified in the Weiner et al. (1971) landmark publication. However for the most part, attribution studies continue to assume that ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty are the only factors used to assess performance outcomes. Research investigating a wider range of causal factors is needed (Weiner, 1979).

This study employed the three dimensional classification system developed by Weiner (1979) and investigated nine causal factors. Weiner's (1979) three level taxonomy classifies causal factors according to locus of causality and degree of stability, the original attribution model dimensions, and according to controllability. Controllability refers to whether or not the factor is subject to volitional control. Table 1 presents the nine factors investigated in this study classified according to these three dimensions.

Table 1

Causes of Success and Failure Classified According to  
Locus of Causality, Degree of Stability, and Controllability

	<u>INTERNAL</u>		<u>EXTERNAL</u>	
	STABLE	UNSTABLE	STABLE	UNSTABLE
UNCONTROLLABLE	Ability	Mood at Time of Task  Interest In Task	Task Difficulty	Luck
CONTROLLABLE	Typical Effort	Immediate Effort	Supervisor	Help From Others

#### Significance of the Study

Results of attribution research continue to be inconclusive indicating the necessity for moving beyond the research paradigm generally used to investigate causal attributions. This study expanded upon the traditional research model by employing a new methodology and by considering variables not adequately addressed in the past. The data obtained from this study could support researchers who believe new directions in attribution research are needed if an understanding of sex differences in achievement behavior is to be reached.

Results from this study could also provide information on the relationship of sex role identity and self-esteem to causal attributions. Emerging patterns in these relationships may have important implications for mental health professionals. Underestimating ability can result in underachievement (Pheterson, Kiesler, & Golderberg, 1971). If counselors are aware of differences in the attribution patterns of persons with differing sex role identities and

varying levels of self-esteem, they may be better prepared to facilitate growth in clients with underachievement problems.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms below will be defined as follows:

Achievement Domain -- Classification of reported success or failure experiences according to area or type of achievement. The three domains employed in this study were Intrapersonal Events, Interpersonal-Affiliative Events, and Mastery-Control Events.

Agentic Self-Esteem -- Based upon Bakan's (1966) model of agency and communion orientations toward life, agentic self-esteem refers to that dimension of self-esteem concerned with ability and performance. Agentic self-esteem is concerned with the individual's achievement and is reflected in such behaviors as assertiveness and independence.

Androgynous -- Sex role identity embracing both masculine and feminine characteristics. Behaviors are exhibited dependent on situational appropriateness rather than in a fashion predetermined on the basis of sex.

Causal Attributions -- The factors to which persons assign responsibility for the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of achievement tasks. In this study nine causal attributions were investigated: ability, typical effort, interest in task, immediate effort, mood at time of task, supervisor, luck, task ease/difficulty, and help from others.

Controllability -- Dimension that classifies causal attribution factors according to whether or not they are subject to volitional control.

Counselors -- Persons in public or private employment settings holding a master's degree or above, who report counseling as their primary job responsibility.

Degree of Stability -- Dimension that classifies causal attribution factors as fixed or variable over time.

External Attributions -- Causal explanations for success or failure at a task reflecting the belief that outcomes are primarily due to outside influences over which individuals have no control.

Feminine -- Sex role identity that embraces many personality attributes that conflict with achievement such as nonassertiveness, an avoidance of competition, and an unwillingness to take risks.

Fixed Attributions -- Causal explanations for success or failure at a task that are stable over time.

Internal Attributions -- Causal explanations for success or failure at a task reflecting the belief that characteristics of the self are primarily responsible for performance outcomes.

Locus of Causality -- Dimension that classifies causal attribution factors as internal or external to the individual.

Masculine -- Sex role identity that includes those personality characteristics associated with achievement such as independence, aggression, competitiveness, and a willingness to take risks.

Undifferentiated Sex-Type -- Sex role identity classification that results from a low endorsement of both the masculine and feminine characteristics on the Bem Sex Role Inventory.

Variable Attributions -- Causal explanations for success or failure at a task that are subject to change over time.

### Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study will be organized into four chapters. Related literature on attribution theory, sex roles, self-esteem, and comparing traditional career women to nontraditional career women will be reviewed in Chapter Two. The methodology used in this study will be described in Chapter Three. The results of the study and a discussion of these results will be presented in Chapter Four. The conclusions, implications, summary, and recommendations for future research will be presented in Chapter Five.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature related to this investigation will be divided into four sections: attribution theory, sex roles, self-esteem, and traditional and nontraditional career women. The section on attribution theory will include theoretical background, theoretical models, studies revealing sex differences in causal attributions, studies revealing no sex differences in causal attributions, and future directions for attribution research. The section on sex roles will include sex role identity, and sex role identity and causal attribution studies. The section on self-esteem will include theoretical background, self-systems, and multidimensional theories of self-esteem. The last section of the review will include a discussion of traditional and nontraditional career women.

#### Attribution Theory

##### Theoretical Background

The attributional model of achievement behavior was developed by Heider (1958) and subsequently expanded by Weiner et al. (1971). This model has been used extensively in efforts to explain sex differences in achievement by identifying corresponding differences in causal attributions assigned to performance outcomes (Teglasi, 1977).

Weiner et al. (1971) originally hypothesized individuals utilize four attribution factors to both predict and explain the outcome of an

achievement related event. These four factors, ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty, are employed for both self-evaluations and for assessing the performances of others. Future expectations of success and failure are also based upon the assumed level of ability in relation to perceived task difficulty as well as on an estimate of intended effort and anticipated luck.

The four causal factors can be classified into two dimensions: locus of causality and degree of stability. The first dimension is derived from Rotter's (1966) internal-external control of construct and refers to whether a person perceives success as contingent upon internal or external causal sources. Ability and effort describe qualities of the person undertaking the activity and 'are therefore internal components. Task difficulty and luck are environmental factors and are external to the person. The degree of stability dimension indicates whether the factor is fixed or variable over time. Ability and task difficulty are somewhat enduring characteristics whereas effort and luck are relatively variable.

More recently, Weiner (1979) has stated his concern that the four factors identified in his original research were not meant to be considered the only determinants of success and failure. Although ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty consistently emerge among the main perceived causes of achievement performance, research employing open-ended response methodologies reveals these four are not the only factors assigned responsibility for performance outcomes.

Bar-Tal and Darom (Note 1) investigated attributions made in academic settings and found seven causes emerged as those used to explain success or failure including ability, immediate effort, and



interest in the subject matter. Cooper and Burger (Note 2) also investigated attributions for success or failure in a classroom setting and found that several factors in addition to Weiner's et al. (1971) original four were identified including typical effort, mood, and help/bias of others.

Weiner (1979) developed a new classification system to categorize the list of conceivable causes for success and failure. This taxonomy expands on the original classification dimensions of locus of causality and degree of stability to include controllability as the third dimension. This dimension classifies factors according to whether or not they are subject to volitional control.

Employing these three dimensions, causal factors can theoretically be classified within one of eight cells. Among the most frequently identified internal causes of success and failure, ability is stable and uncontrollable, typical effort is stable and controllable, mood at time of task and interest in task unstable and uncontrollable, and immediate effort unstable and controllable. Among the external causes most often employed, task difficulty is stable and uncontrollable, luck is unstable and uncontrollable, supervisor may be perceived as stable and controllable, and help from others as unstable and controllable.

Weiner (1979) concedes that problems exist with this classification scheme. One unanswered question is whether or not controllability assumes only the perspective of the actor. The factors typical effort, immediate effort, and help from others are controllable from the vantage point of the actor. However, supervisor cannot necessarily be controlled except by the supervisors themselves.

### Theoretical Models

A number of investigators have reported sex differences in their attribution research. Researchers have proposed several models to explain the occurrence of these sex differences. These models vary in terms of their predictions and the degree of empirical support each has received. They are similar in that the models are based upon research limited to investigations of the original Weiner et al. (1971) two dimensional taxonomy of causes. The three models most cited are General Externality, Self Derogation, and Low Expectancy (Frieze, Whitley, Hanusa, & McHugh, 1982).

One of the first models developed to explain sex differences in attributions, General Externality, suggested that women tend to attribute both their success and failures to external sources, i.e., luck and task difficulty (Feather, 1969; Simon & Feather, 1973). Several explanations for this externality have been presented. Feather (1969), whose work supported this theory, suggested that the greater tendency to attribute success and failure to external sources rather than to ability among women may be a result of how women perceive the feminine role. Women have traditionally been taught to appear modest and dependent. Assertiveness and self-confidence, reflected in self-acknowledgements of ability, are masculine traits and therefore inappropriate behaviors for women.

A second proposed explanation for externality among women is that women are higher in both fear of success and fear of failure and therefore withdraw from achievement situations. Horner (1968) originally identified fear of success as the tendency for women to internalize early in life the notion that femininity and individual

achievement reflecting intellectual competence are mutually exclusive, antagonistic goals (Bremer & Wittig, 1980). Using task ease and luck to explain success allows women to maintain a distance from achievement and a lack of involvement in future tasks. Using these external attributions also reduces personal responsibility for success and decreases feelings of shame for failure (Frieze, Fisher, Hanusa, McHugh, & Valle, 1978a).

A third explanation for externality provides a sociological perspective. Wiley, Crittenden and Berg (1979) suggest that because women and other low status groups tend to have less control over their destinies than those of higher status groups, they tend to attribute performance outcomes to external factors.

The Self-Derogation model predicts that women attribute successes to external factors but attribute failures to internal sources (Heilman & Kram, 1978; Ickes & Layden, 1978; Nicholls, 1975). This second model assumes that people attempt to maintain a consistent set of beliefs about themselves and process information according to these beliefs (Aronson & Mettee, 1968). If persons have high self-esteem they will only believe positive information about themselves and therefore internalize success but not failure outcomes. If persons have low self-esteem they will only believe negative information about themselves and therefore internalize failures but not successes (Fitch, 1970). Women have been reported as typically having low self-esteem in achievement settings (Frieze et al., 1978a). Consequently, in order to maintain consistency in self-beliefs, the self-derogation model predicts that women will accept negative information about themselves and discount positive information about themselves.

Women have been shown to have generally low expectations of their performance in achievement situations (Deaux, 1976). According to the Low Expectancy model, low expectations lead to unstable attributions, i.e., luck and effort for success, and stable attributions, i.e., lack of ability and task difficulty for failure. Even in cases of success, the outcome is discounted and therefore does not lead to an increase in expectancies for future performance. In cases of failure, attributions to stable sources, i.e., poor ability, serve to further lower future expectations (Deaux, 1976; Frieze et al., 1978a).

Low expectancy has been shown to be greatest for women performing unfamiliar tasks. In these cases generalized expectations or stereotypic assumptions are relied upon to replace knowledge gained through previous experience. This has been found to be especially true for women performing tasks defined as "masculine." As these tasks are perceived as inappropriate for females, women have low expectations for their own success. Even if they should subsequently succeed at these tasks, the outcomes are attributed to unstable causes (McHugh, Fisher, & Frieze, 1982; Deaux, 1976).

In spite of the substantial energy devoted to achievement attribution research, as illustrated by the theoretical models discussed, a consensus concerning sex differences has not been reached (Sohn, 1982). The reason for this lack of agreement is the inconsistency among research findings across investigations. Studies have failed to replicate the findings of similar earlier ones (Feather, 1969 and Feather & Simon, 1973) or when replicated produce contradictory results (Nicholls, 1975 and Simon & Feather, 1973).

Many published studies reveal sex differences on at least one of the four original causal factors. However several recent studies have

concluded that main effect sex differences do not exist at all (Frieze et al., 1982; Sohn, 1982; Sweeny, Moreland, Gruber, 1982; Travis, 1982; Travis et al., 1982). The following section will review the empirical findings of research investigating sex differences in causal attributions. The investigations reviewed will be divided into two sections: studies revealing sex differences in attribution patterns and studies revealing no sex differences in attribution patterns.

### Studies Revealing Sex Differences in Causal Attributions

One of the earliest studies to uncover sex differences in causal attributions was conducted by Feather (1969). In this study, undergraduate students performed laboratory tasks then indicated whether they believed the outcomes of their performances were due to their lack of ability. Measures were also taken of students' perceived self-competence, self-esteem, and feelings of inadequacy prior to the task, and of students' satisfaction with their performances after the task. Results of this study revealed female students were more likely to attribute their success or failure to external factors, i.e., good or bad luck, than were males. Females were also found to have higher inadequacy scores and lower initial confidence scores. No other significant sex differences were reported.

In a later study, Simon and Feather (1973) asked undergraduate students to identify those factors that influence their initial expectations of success on a college examination to determine under what conditions these factors would be perceived as causes of the outcome. The analysis of data revealed a significant main effect due to sex for ratings of initial ability. Males rated their preperformance ability higher than females. Females who failed the examination were especially

likely to rate their preperformance ability as low. Females also attached more importance to luck and task difficulty as factors causing their outcomes than males.

The tendency for males to credit their success to ability more so than women has been replicated in several studies (Deaux, 1979; Deaux & Farris, 1977) as has the greater tendency for women to use luck to explain their performance outcomes (Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1977; Deaux & Farris, 1977). Deaux (1979) investigated differences in male and female managers' performance self-evaluations and attribution of causality patterns and found that males saw themselves as performing significantly better overall than did females.

When comparing themselves on a number of job related characteristics to other persons holding similar positions, male managers evaluated their ability greater and their intelligence higher than female managers. Males also viewed their jobs as more difficult, reported having a better relationship with their supervisors, and felt they received relatively more approval for their work than did the female managers. Assessments of causality patterns revealed males claimed ability as more responsible for their success than did females. Luck, effort, and task difficulty were not differentially used as explanations for success or failure.

Women often take less credit for their successes than men and in some instances have been reported to blame themselves more for failure (Levine, Reis, Sue, & Turner, 1976; McHugh, Fisher & Frieze, 1982; Nicholls, 1975; Rosenfield & Stephan, 1978; Stephan, Rosenfield, & Stephan, 1976). The nature of the task in determining attributions for success and failure has been mentioned by a number of researchers as

especially relevant to these findings (Deaux & Farris, 1977; Luginbuhl, Crowe & Kahan, 1975; McHugh, Frieze, & Hanusa, 1982; Nicholls, 1975; Zuckerman, 1979). For example, sex differences in causal attribution have been found in studies where subjects were asked to perform tasks defined as traditionally masculine.

In a review of causal attribution studies, Zuckerman (1979) concluded that women tend to take less responsibility for success and accept more responsibility for failure for masculine tasks. Rosenfield and Stephan (1978) found women took less credit than men for success on a masculine task but took more credit than men for success on a feminine task. Deaux and Farris (1977) found in two experiments that males evaluated their ability as higher particularly when the task was labeled masculine. Females were more likely to use luck to explain performance regardless of how the task was defined.

Whether a task is competitive or cooperative has also been shown to affect causal attributions (Ames, 1978; House, 1974; Stephan et al., 1976; Teglasi, 1977; Teglasi, 1978). Teglasi (1977) found females gave more external and more unstable attributions for success in a competitive condition than for success obtained cooperatively. Cooperating females did not differ from cooperating males in their causal attributions. Ames' (1978) study suggested that females take less responsibility for success and more responsibility for failure in a competitive context while males have the reverse pattern.

Stephan et al. (1976) asked female and male subjects to attribute their performance outcomes in a competitive game to one of the four original causal factors. The authors found males and females competing against females took more credit for success than they gave successful

opponents and blamed themselves less for failure than they blamed failing opponents. Females competing against females did not show the same attributional patterns. Stephan et al. (1976) suggested that females competing against males were less defensive because they considered the task masculine and their opponents as males were expected to be more skilled than they.

The Stephan, Rosenfield, and Stephan (1976) study was replicated by Heilman and Kram (1978). Heilman and Kram predicted that when paired with a female as opposed to a male coworker, both men and women would take more responsibility for success and less responsibility for failure. They further predicted that men with female coworkers and women with male coworkers would respectively be the least and most self-derogating in their attributions. The results of this study partially supported the authors' hypotheses. When paired with men on laboratory tasks, women's tendencies to derogate themselves were evident. This did not hold true however when women worked with other women. Men also had higher self-ratings when paired with women indicating that situational factors as well as individual predisposition impact on attributions for performance outcomes.

Several studies have shown that perceptions of outcomes explain individual differences in persons having high and low achievement motivation (Bar-Tal & Frieze, 1977; Kukla, 1972; Teglassi, 1978; Wieggers & Frieze, 1977). Bar-Tal and Frieze (1977) explored the attributional patterns of high and low achievement motivated women and compared these patterns with those of men. The authors found that the only main effect for sex to reach the significance level was the tendency of women to employ higher luck ratings.



In contrast, many of the interaction effects involving sex and achievement motivation were found to be significant, replicating earlier studies and/or confirming the Bar-Tal and Frieze (1977) hypotheses. Males with high achievement motivation had very high estimates of their abilities. Males also tended to attribute success primarily to internal sources and to see failure as the result of external sources. High achievement motivated women had strong beliefs in effort as a causal factor for both success and failure. They also tended to be somewhat more external for success than the high achievement males.

#### Studies Revealing No Sex Differences in Causal Attributions

Travis (1982) found that sex differences provide very little information about the perception of causality. After investigating subjective evaluations of success and the degree of correspondence between actual and subjective success measures for women and men, no differences were found. Travis' work further revealed similarities on expressions of expectations for future performances and a nearly identical relationship of specific attributions to expectations for men and women.

House (1980) found significant differences in attributions of causality made by subjects observed by others and by subjects not observed by others. Observed subjects evidenced less tendency to attribute their failure to low ability. However, there were no significant main or interaction effects for the sex variable. Houser and Beckman (1978) also failed to find significant sex differences in the casual attributions of male and female college students as did Feather and Simon (1971) in an early investigation of attribution patterns.

Frieze, Whitley, Hanusa, and McHugh (1982) conducted an overall assessment of the three theoretical models for sex differences in causal attributions reported earlier in this chapter. The authors sought to determine which if any of the three theories was best supported by the literature. A meta-analysis of 21 published studies addressing sex differences in ratings for causal attributions was conducted. Results of the meta-analysis revealed that women were found to have a very slight tendency to attribute failure to luck more than men, and men made somewhat stronger attributions to ability for situational success. However, overall there were no strongly supported sex differences in attributions and not one of the three theoretical models was supported.

Sohn (1982) conducted an effect-size analysis of previously published studies to determine the consequences of the relationships found in attribution research. The author investigated two categories of findings: the overall or main effect for sex and the simple sex difference effects for the separate levels of achievement outcome. The investigation was an attempt to validate two popular but partially contradictory hypotheses: females are more external than males in their attributions (Feather, 1969) and females are less egotistic than males by being more external for success and internal for failure (Nicholls, 1975). Sohn concluded that the empirical evidence does not support the contention that the sexes significantly differ in their use of any of the four main types of achievement attributions or that the sexes significantly differ in their use of internal and external attributions.

The McHugh, Fisher, and Frieze (1982) study analyzed the simultaneous effects of two situational factors on the attributions

made by females and males. These factors were whether the task was an intellectual and therefore masculine task or a social and therefore feminine task, and whether the task was performed in a situation of high or low competitiveness. The study failed to reveal sex differences in evaluations of self-performance. There were no task x competition x sex of subject interaction effects therefore disconfirming the authors' predictions.

#### Future Directions for Attribution Research

McHugh, Frieze, and Hanusa (1982) state that the literature on sex differences in attributions is characterized by inconsistencies and has not fulfilled its promise as the key to understanding differential achievement in men and women. Two explanations are offered for these inconsistencies: The failure to adequately consider various situational determinants of sex differences in attributions and the problems of viewing women as an homogeneous group (Frieze et al., 1978a).

Situational variables may be viewed as falling into two categories: the task itself and the context in which the task is performed. What may outwardly appear to be the same task for male and female participants may actually be subjectively two very different tasks in terms of cultural or individual beliefs about the sex appropriateness of the task, gender, or individual differences in attainment value or ego involvement, and the novelty/familiarity of the task. Similarly, the context in which the task is performed, while objectively identical for males and females, may have different subjective implications.

McHugh, Frieze, and Hanusa (1982) suggest that in order to discern attributional tendencies it may be necessary to measure causal attributions across a variety of situations so situational influences affecting one situation do not lead to generalizing results to all situations. For example, Travis et al. (1982) asked respondents to recall an accomplishment and failure they actually experienced and attribute causality for these outcomes. This approach controls for contextual influences that may distort attributions although possible biases against important situational factors must also be considered.

McHugh, Frieze, and Hanusa (1982) also suggest that to understand particular groups of people it makes sense to assess their attributions in their most typical or desirable environments. By asking respondents to define their achievement domains, researchers are also able to classify people into various achievement domain preference groups. The advantages of this approach are that recalled experiences may provide information about the most salient achievement domains of men and women. The recalled experiences are also more likely to have been relevant and important to the respondent, and to be interpreted as a success or failure than are outcomes manipulated by a researcher.

Travis (Note 3) suggests classifying recalled success and failure experiences by achievement domain -- intrapersonal, interpersonal-affiliative, and mastery-control -- to identify corresponding patterns in the assignment of causal attributions to performance outcomes. These three domains are based in part upon the work of Stein and Bailey (1973) who examined differences in the the types of achievements claimed by men and women.

Stein and Bailey (1973) challenge the traditional definition of achievement that narrowly defines it as a collection of events

involving manipulation, mastery, or control such as commanding power or accumulating wealth. The authors argue that interpersonal-affiliative events are also legitimate achievements that are simply less public or monetarily profitable. This affiliative domain is seen as the speciality of women, as reflected in their skills in the interpersonal, social realm. In addition to the two classifications based upon Stein and Bailey's work, Travis (Note 3) has identified a third achievement domain. This intrapersonal category identifies self-growth and expansion as a legitimate area of achievement for both sexes.

Finally, dispositional or motivational variables may be another important source of variance in the responses of women to attributional questions (McHugh, Frieze, & Hanusa, 1982). Generalizing findings concerning all men or all women may fail to account for potentially significant individual differences within each sex. Research that separates men and women into nonhomogeneous groupings is preferable to studies that continue to look only at sex differences.

### Sex Roles

Attribution literature suggests examining differences in sex role identities may contribute to determining the effect of individual differences on patterns of causality (Brewer & Blum, 1978). This section will provide an overview of theories addressing sex role identity development and conclude with a review of studies that have examined the relationship between causal attributions and sex role identity.

#### Sex Role Identity

Kagan (1964) and Kohlberg (1966) both define sex role identity as an acquired self-concept of being masculine or feminine. Kagan

postulates that sex role identity is the product of differences between individuals' sex role attributes and their perceptions of sex role stereotypes. Specifically, Kagan theorizes that individuals compare their own attributes against sex role stereotypes to arrive at a relativistic concept of their sex role identity. Simply put, Kagan views sex role identity as the product of sex role stereotypes and sex role attributes (Storms, 1979).

Kohlberg theorizes that sex role identities cause the difference between individuals' sex role attributes and their perceptions of sex role stereotypes. Kohlberg asserts that sex role identities are firmly established early in life and thereafter serve to mediate the influence of sex role stereotypes on the development of sex role attributes. Sex role identities guide individuals attachment to, evaluation of, and desire to emulate specific adult role models and abstract or stereotypical role models. In short according to Kohlberg, sex role attributes are the product of individuals' sex role identities and perceptions of sex role stereotypes (Storms, 1979).

Psychological theory and research on sex role identities have undergone a dramatic shift in the past decade (Major, Carnevale, & Deaux, 1981). Traditionally, psychologists have accepted the critical input of sex roles in personality development and psychopathologists have considered gender identity essential to personal adjustment. However in recent years, researchers have expressed concern over possible detrimental effects of traditional sex role standards upon the full development capabilities of men and women (Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Deutsch & Gilbert, 1976; Erdwins, Small, & Gross, 1980; Gump, 1972).

Traditional sex roles define the masculine identity as possessing such traits as "aggressive," "dominant," "independent," "willing to take risks." The traditional feminine sex role identity is one of "passivity," "nurturance," "submissiveness," "dependence" (Bem, 1974; Osofsky & Osofsky, 1971; Stake, 1981). Researchers have asserted that adherence to these traditional sex role standards has outlived its usefulness and serves only to prevent men and women from developing their full potential as complete human beings (Bem, 1974; Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972).

Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Broverman, and Broverman (1968) assessed the relationship of self-concept to differentially valued sex role stereotypes. College students were asked to indicate using 122 bipolar items what typical adult males, females and they themselves were like. Results revealed a higher valuation of stereotypically masculine than feminine characteristics. Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel (1970) found that mental health clinicians' concepts of a healthy male did not differ significantly from their concepts of a healthy adult sex unspecified. However, their concepts of a mature healthy woman did differ significantly from their adult healthy concepts.

Deutsch and Gilbert (1976) found women's sex role concepts regarding their real self, perceptions of their ideal self, and their belief of what men desire in women were highly dissimilar. This dissimilarity was not true for the males in this study. Men's evaluations of their real self, ideal self, and their belief of what women desire in men were highly similar.

Recent research on sex role identity has proposed that androgynous individuals exhibit greater behavioral flexibility and interpersonal

adjustment than either sex-typed or sex-reversed individuals do. An androgynous individual is one who has both masculine and feminine characteristics and chooses to behave as is situationally appropriate rather than in a fashion predetermined on the basis of sex (Bem, 1974). Bem (1975) reported that androgynous individuals of both genders were able to engage in either instrumental (masculine) or expressive (feminine) behavior depending on situational contexts and demands. However, sex-typed and sex-reversed persons engaged in relatively rigid and stereotyped behaviors regardless of situational characteristics.

Flaherty and Dusek (1980) reported male and female college students differed on measures of self-esteem factors depending upon their sex role identity. Subjects classified as androgynous or masculine scored significantly higher than those classified as undifferentiated or as feminine on an achievement/leadership factor of self-esteem. Androgynous students scored higher than undifferentiated students on an adjustment factor. Androgynous and feminine students scored higher than masculine and undifferentiated students on a congeniality/socializability factor. Flaherty and Dusek concluded the results of their study supported the theory of androgynous flexibility.

Major, Carnevale, and Deaux (1981) found that male and female androgynous persons were liked by male and female others better than, and perceived by others as more adjusted than, undifferentiated persons. Androgynous persons were also generally liked better than, and perceived as more adjusted than, feminine or masculine individuals.

#### Sex Role Identity and Causal Attribution Studies

A limited number of studies have examined the relationship between sex role identification and patterns of causal attributions for



performance outcomes. Brewer and Blum (1979) investigated the relationship between sex role identity and causal attributions for performance in math/physical Science courses in an academic setting. Freshman students completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) and a questionnaire assessing their attributions of causality for course performance. Responses to the causal questions were pooled resulting in a Total Control score for each subject.

Results revealed Total Control scores were significantly more external among female than male respondents. Females tended to make more internal attributions for failures in math/physical Science courses and more external attributions for successes than males. The authors further found androgynous persons were more likely to perceive math/physical Science achievements as due to internal sources. Feminine sex typed persons were more likely to perceive math/physical Science achievements as due to external sources.

Teglasi (1978) extended the Bar-Tal and Frieze (1977) study concerning causal attributions and achievement motivation to examine intercorrelations between these two variables plus subject sex role orientation. Teglası found that female undergraduate students with a traditional role orientation had lower achievement motivation than their less traditional counterparts. Traditionally oriented women also were more likely than nontraditional women to attribute failure to lack of ability but only when working with a male partner. It was further found that traditional women attributed both success and failure outcomes to ability or inability when paired with a woman in a cooperative situation significantly more so than did nontraditional women. Traditional women also were more likely to attribute success to

ease of task when in the presence of a man than were nontraditional women.

Wieggers and Frieze (1977) investigated the effects of achievement level, gender, and female traditionality of career aspirations on success and failure. Subjects were high school seniors who were classified according to career choice and grade point average. Results indicated that males and females high and low in achievement level, and traditional and nontraditional females, experienced success and failure differently.

Levine et al. (1982) conducted a study to identify and assess individual differences between men and women to determine their mediating role in producing sex-differentiated styles of attribution. The variables examined were self-esteem, achievement motivation, fear of success, attitudes toward women, and androgyny. Results revealed males were more likely than females to attribute their outcomes to ability and less likely to assign their performance outcomes to effort and luck.

However, sex differences in attribution patterns were eliminated when the effects of individual differences were controlled. Achievement motivation was the best predictor successfully explaining each of the sex differences for ability, effort, and luck attributions. Masculinity scores also successfully accounted for sex differences in luck attributions. The authors suggested that sex of subject was not a strong predictor of attributions and, in fact, predicted more poorly than the sex role measure. Levine et al. (1982) suggest levels of self-esteem may affect causal attributions.

### Self-Esteem

The concept of self-esteem has found an eminent place in sociological and psychological studies. A formidable body of literature exists reflecting diverse conceptualizations of this important construct. This section will examine the theoretical background of self-esteem. This will be followed by a discussion of two major self-systems, self-enhancement theory, and self-consistency theory and their relationships to causal attributions. Finally, the section will conclude with a discussion of multidimensional theories of self-esteem and look at the concept of agentic self-esteem.

#### Theoretical Background

William James (1890, 1892) is generally identified as the earliest "self" psychologist. James' major theoretical contribution to the study of the self is the development of the I-Me dichotomy. In this delineation, the total self or person is differentiated into two "discriminant aspects": the self as the knower and the self as that which is known. James perceived identity as divided into three parts: the material Me which refers to all material things with which a person experiences a sense of unity, the social Me which refers to recognition received from others and the spiritual Me which is the states of consciousness perceived by persons themselves.

Cooley (1902) was the next major theorist to deal with the idea of the self. He confined his work to that aspect James labeled the Social Me. Cooley developed the concept of the looking-glass self which postulates that individuals' conceptions of themselves are determined by perceptions of other people's reactions to them. According to Cooley, a sense of self always involves a sense of other people. Mead

(1934, 1956) adopted principles from James and Cooley to expound a theory that views the self as an I-Me distinction that is also the product of interactions where persons experience themselves as reflected in the behaviors of others.

Mead viewed language as an essential part of the development and operation of the self, i.e., the self as a symbol-using process. Mead's concept of the "generalized other" was an important contribution to self theory as it was the first concept to account for a global cross-situational sense of self. The concept of "generalized other" implies persons develop the ability to take the role of a group of others -- real or inferred -- which correspond to society's representation within the individual.

#### Self-Systems

Recent research on self-esteem reflects the development of self theories based upon empirical studies of self-esteem and its correlates (Wells & Marwell, 1976). Two major theoretical approaches or self-systems have emerged from self theory: self-enhancement theory and self-consistency theory. These theories will be discussed as they apply to performance outcomes of achievement related tasks.

According to self-enhancement theory which is exemplified in the writings of Cartwright and Zander (1960), Dittes (1959), and Homans (1961), individuals seek to maximize their self-esteem. That is, individuals have a need to view themselves as favorably as possible. If this need is not satisfied it becomes stronger. Consequently, individuals with any level of chronic self-esteem (high, medium, or low) will react more favorably to success even if unexpected and less favorably to failure even if expected.

Self-consistency theory reflected in the work of Heider (1958) and Lecky (1945) assumes that individuals strive to maintain consistent attitudes toward themselves. Thus, performance outcomes that are inconsistent with those attitudes will produce a negative reaction. Consequently, individuals with high self-esteem will respond more favorably to success and less favorably to failure than individuals with low self-esteem. Individuals with low self-esteem will respond more favorably to failure than success, actually avoiding success to remain consistent with their own negative expectations.

Self-consistency and self-enhancement theories both contend that high self-esteem persons will ascribe successful performance outcomes to internal causal sources and failure outcomes to external sources. However, the two theories suggest contradictory hypotheses concerning how low self-esteem persons ascribe causality when they experience success or failure outcomes. Self-enhancement theory suggests low self-esteem persons ascribe less internal causality for failure than success. Self-consistency theory predicts the opposite finding.

Researchers have attempted to produce empirical evidence to support the legitimacy of these conflicting theories. A limited number of these studies have examined self-enhancement and self-consistency theories as applied to attribution research. Fitch (1970) investigated the causal attributions for performance outcomes of undergraduate students. Fitch found students attributed significantly more causality to internal sources for success outcomes than for failure outcomes supporting the self-enhancement theory. Fitch also found that students with low self-esteem receiving failure feedback attributed significantly more causality to internal sources than did high

self-esteem students receiving failure feedback, thereby supporting the self-consistency theory for low self-esteem subjects.

Burke (1978) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and causal attributions for performance outcomes. Undergraduate students with low, medium, and high self-esteem were asked to attribute success and failure outcomes to ability, effort, luck, or task difficulty. Results of this study revealed that success was attributed to internal sources more than failure. Performances consistent with self-esteem were attributed more than inconsistent outcomes to ability and task difficulty, and performance outcomes inconsistent with self-esteem were attributed more than consistent outcomes to luck. Only the attribution pattern for effort was not found to be largely a function of maintaining self-consistency.

Burke suggests the results of this study lend general support to the self-consistency theory. However, Burke also suggests that because of their unidimensional focus, neither self-system theory was able to adequately anticipate the relationships that emerged between self-esteem and performance outcome variables as they related to causal attributions.

#### Multidimensional Theories of Self-Esteem

Burke's (1978) belief in the inadequacy of unidimensional theories of self-esteem is shared by several theorists who in the last decade have devoted much attention to examining self-esteem from a multidimensional perspective. Multidimensional theories tend toward the conceptualization of self-esteem as the function of two processes. The first process refers to the selected appraisals of significant others in persons' social environments in the form of social approval. The

second process addresses persons' feelings of efficacy and competence derived from their own perceptions of their effect on their environments. The first process leads to feelings of self-worth. The second process is more closely associated with feelings of achievement, power, and confidence (Franks & Marolla, 1976).

These two qualitatively different processes or types of self-esteem are reflected in Coopersmith's (1967) self-esteem theory. Coopersmith stressed the generality of cross-situational stability of self-esteem but also recognized its multi-faceted nature and identified four sources of self-validation. These sources are power -- the ability to influence and control others, significance -- the acceptance of attention and affection from others, virtue -- adherence to moral and ethical standards, and competence -- successful performance in meeting demands for achievement.

Brissett (1972) suggested a distinction between self-worth, a concept that pertains to one's effectiveness or mastery in the world, and self-evaluation, a more socially oriented dimension. Gordon (1969) proposed four senses of the self: competence, self-determination, unity and moral worth, and suggested that each of these dimensions is linked to a universally shared human concern.

The majority of self-esteem measures employed in self-esteem research are based on unidimensional theories. The assumption underlying these global measures is that self-evaluations are constant across dimensions of the self and across situations. The reliance of studies on purely global measures has been criticized (Franks & Marolla, 1976). Simpson and Boyle (1975) argue that global self-esteem measures are too vague and general to allow for specific behavioral predictions.

In response to this criticism, Stake (1979) developed an instrument specifically designed to tap one dimension of self-esteem. The Performance Self-Esteem Scale (PSES) is based upon Bakan's (1966) work in which he explored his perceptions of the duality of humankind's nature. Bakan adopted the terms "agency" and "communion" to characterize two fundamental modalities of human existence.

Agency addresses existence as the individual and manifests in self-protection, self-assertion, self-expansion, isolation, and alienation. Agency is further manifested in a repression of thought, feeling and impulse, and the urge to master. Communion refers to the participation of the individual in some larger organism of which the individual is a part. This collective experience is manifested in contact, openness, union, noncontractual cooperation, and in a lack of repression.

The Performance Self-Esteem Scale assesses an individual's agentic qualities. This "agentic" self-esteem is concerned with achievement and performance behaviors and is reflected in assertiveness, independence, and an ability to be influential in a task oriented group. The PSES assesses a broad range of self-evaluations of ability and performance while excluding other self-evaluations such as the ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships, likeability, and moral goodness which are communal characteristics.

#### Traditional and Nontraditional Career Women

Research investigating causal attributions in the field has focused on nontraditional occupations. Studies have shown that women choosing nontraditional careers differ from women choosing traditional careers across a wide variety of dimensions. Results of studies



examining one population cannot be generalized to the other creating the need for studies examining traditional career groups. This section will examine studies comparing women choosing traditional careers to women choosing nontraditional careers.

The phrase nontraditional career choice refers to the selection of an occupation which has been traditionally stereotyped as the exclusive domain of the opposite sex (Auster & Auster, 1981). Women choosing traditional career paths have been shown to differ from women choosing nontraditional career paths across various dimensions.

Karman (1972) compared female college students who chose traditional (stereotypically feminine) or nontraditional (stereotypically masculine) careers on the basis of family background, socioeconomic, and personality characteristics. The students with nontraditional aspirations came from families with higher incomes, had more educated mothers, were more theoretically oriented, held more liberal attitudes toward the role of women in society, and did better academically than their traditional counterparts.

Nagley (1971) found similar differences in a study of "pioneers" and traditional career women. Women in nontraditional fields were more committed to their careers, had well educated and supportive fathers, had husbands employed at higher occupational levels, and had cooperative home decision making responsibilities. Tangri (1972) studied women students in their senior year of college that chose traditionally masculine professions. The author found that these "role-innovators" were less likely to displace their achievement concerns onto their present or future husbands than women choosing

traditional careers. Role-innovators were also found to have higher success goals and to express greater commitment to their careers.

Peng and Jaffee (1979) examined multiple factors that may influence the entry of women into nontraditional fields as they move from high school into college. Specifically, the study investigated the direct relationships of family background characteristics, high school experience, academic ability, and plans and attitudes toward the choice of nontraditional fields among college women students. The results of this study revealed that high school course work, academic ability, a success orientation, and educational plans were important predictors for women's entry into nontraditional fields.

Heilman (1979) suggested that the sexual composition of an occupation influences preferences for and perceptions of personal success in that occupation. In an investigation of high school students' attitudes toward nontraditional occupations, Heilman found that females perceived greater potential personal success in occupations with high percentages of women than did males. Harren, Ross, Tinsley, and Moreland (1979) found that sex role orientation and gender were significant predictors of college students choice of occupation.

Collins, Reardon, and Waters (1980) examined the influence of both sex and sex role orientation on expressed interest and perceived personal success of female and male college students for male-dominated occupations. The authors concluded that perceptions of success for females but not for males were influenced by the percentage of females in the occupation. High masculine males reported greater interest and perceived success in male-dominated occupations than low masculine

males. Low feminine oriented women perceived greater success than high feminine women. Wertheim, Widom, and Wortzel (1978) found men and women in traditionally female occupations scored higher on femininity scales and reported significantly lower educational status for their mothers than those subjects in traditionally masculine occupations.

#### Summary

A review of the literature indicates that future research must focus on situational and individual differences in order to determine the significance of sex differences in patterns of causal attributions to achievement behavior. Sex role identity and self-esteem were suggested as two possible variables affecting causal attributions to be investigated. The number of studies examining individual differences in causal attributions was limited, particularly those studies conducted in real life settings. Those studies that were conducted in the field examined nontraditional or stereotypically masculine professions. Differences between women in traditional and nontraditional fields were discussed supporting the legitimacy of extending investigations of causal attributions to examining persons in traditionally female fields.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of counselors' sex, sex role identities, and levels of agentic self-esteem on their causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes. The hypotheses, population, and sample, instruments, research procedures, analyses of data, and limitations of this study are discussed in this chapter.

#### Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis One. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex.

Hypothesis Two. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities.

Hypothesis Three. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

Hypothesis Four. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex.

Hypothesis Five. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities.

Hypothesis Six. There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

#### Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of the 5,648 members of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA). AMHCA is one of 13 divisions of the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). Any person in public or private practice whose primary responsibility is in the area of mental health counseling or consultation is eligible for AMHCA membership. Students enrolled in an academic program for mental health counseling may also join. There are no additional requirements to obtain membership in AMHCA.

Membership statistics are gathered through an AMHCA survey that is completed by all new members. Due to AMHCA's rapidly growing membership roles, information is not available on all current members. However, statistics are available on the approximately 4,700 members included in the December, 1981, American Personnel and Guidance Association statistics report.

In December, 1981, there were 2,080 male AMHCA members and 2,636 female members. The majority of these counselors were employed in either a college/university or private practice setting. Table 2 presents the AMHCA membership according to primary employment setting.

Table 2  
AMHCA Membership by Primary Employment Setting

Employment Setting	Number of Members
College or University	671
Private Practice	650
Private Counseling Center	577
Community Mental Health Center	524
Community Agency	433
Rehabilitation Program or Agency	210
State or Local Government Agency	183
Secondary or Senior High School	158
Parochial or Private Institution	109
Elementary School	107
Junior or Community College	96
Federal Government	76
Middle School	74
Association or Foundation	51
Corrections	28
Probation and Parole	24
Family Services	7
Other Settings	391

The typical AMHCA member holds a master's degree. Table 3 presents the AMHCA membership according to academic credentials.

Table 3

AMHCA Membership by Academic Credentials

Academic Credential	Number of Members
Doctoral Degree	933
Educational Specialist Degree	146
Master's Degree	3,050
Bachelor's Degree	478
Associated Degrees or Certificates	26
Other	133

The statistics on AMHCA members' primary job responsibilities reveal over one half of the membership have positions as counselors. Table 4 presents the AMHCA membership according to primary job responsibility.

Table 4

AMHCA Membership by Primary Job Responsibility

Primary Job Responsibility	Number of Members
Counselor	2,467
Counselor Educator	369
Administrators	298
Supervisors/Consultants	280
Student Personnel Work	37
Paraprofessional	28
Other	670
Student	589

AMHCA's membership by race is presented in Table 5.

Table 5  
AMHCA Membership by Race

Race	Number of Members
White	4,172
Black	310
Native American	65
Hispanic	54
Asian American	32
Other	67

The American Personnel and Guidance Association offers access to the membership rolls of its' 13 divisions for a fee. Mailing lists in lots of 1,000 can be purchased according to division, state, zip code area, members' primary job responsibility, members' work setting, or any combination of these categories. For this study, 1,000 names were randomly selected by APGA computer from the approximately 2,500 AMHCA members who specified their primary job responsibility as counselors.

An additional criterion for inclusion in this study was that subjects have a minimum of a master's degree. As mailing lists indicating members' academic credentials could not be purchased, a Demographic Information Questionnaire (DIQ) to obtain this and other demographic information was completed by all respondents. Subjects indicating on the DIQ they had less than a master's degree or had a primary job responsibility other than counselor were not included in the data analyses.



Every second counselor from the 1,000 name mailing list was chosen until 600 names were selected for inclusion in the study. The final sample included 127 counselors. Of this 127, 62 were males and 65 were females. The total return sample was 158 counselors or a 26 percent return rate. Of the respondents not included in the final sample, 12 did not adequately complete the instruments, 12 returned their instruments after the data analyses were completed, four did not meet the criteria for inclusion in the study and three stated they did not wish to participate.

### Instruments

#### The Bem Sex Role Inventory

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) was developed in 1974 by Sandra Bem to assess respondents' sex role identities (Appendix A). The BSRI consists of a Masculinity and Femininity Scale each containing 20 personality characteristics. Bem selected these characteristics on the basis of sex-typed social desirability rather than on a differential endorsement by men and women as is true of other sex role inventories. In developing the instrument, characteristics qualified as feminine if they were judged to be more desirable for a woman than a man in American society, and qualified as masculine if they were judged to be more desirable for a man than a woman in American society.

The BSRI also contains characteristics that are completely neutral with respect to sex. These items comprise the Social Desirability Scale which provides a neutral context for the Masculinity and Femininity Scales. The Social Desirability Scale was originally

included to ensure the BSRI was not merely tapping a general tendency to endorse socially desirable traits.

The BSRI is a self-administering paper and pencil instrument. It requires respondents indicate on a seven point Likert scale how accurately each of 60 personality characteristics describes them. Possible responses range from one indicating the characteristic is "never or almost never true" for the respondent to seven, indicating the characteristic is "true or almost always true" for the respondent.

On the basis of their responses, respondents receive a Masculinity Score and a Femininity Score. Masculinity Scores are determined by the mean self-rating for all endorsed feminine characteristics. Group medians for the Masculinity and Femininity Scores for the subject population are then calculated to determine the respondents' sex role classification.

Those respondents whose scores fall above the masculinity median and below the femininity median are classified as masculine. Those respondents whose scores fall above the femininity median but below the masculinity median are classified as feminine. Those respondents whose scores fall above both the masculinity and femininity medians are classified as androgynous. Those respondents whose scores fall below both the masculinity and femininity medians are classified as undifferentiated.

Bem (1974) collected normative data on 444 male and 279 undergraduate students from Stanford University and 117 male and 77 female paid volunteers from Foothill Junior College. Coefficient alpha was computed separately for the Masculinity, Femininity, and Social Desirability Scales for each of the two normative samples to estimate

the internal consistency of the BSRI. The Stanford students' and Foothill Junior College volunteers' scores were respectively as follows: Masculinity .86 and .86, Femininity .80 and .82, and Social Desirability .75 and .70.

Using a formula for linear combinations, coefficient alpha was computed for the androgynous difference scores. The reliability of the androgyny difference score was .85 for the Stanford University sample and .86 for the Foothill Junior College sample. Test-retest reliability for the BSRI was also computed using students from the Stanford sample. Approximately four weeks after the initial test administration, 28 males and 28 females were re-administered the BSRI.

Product moment correlations were computed between the first and second administrations for the Masculinity, Femininity, Androgynous, and Social Desirability Scales. All four correlations proved to be highly reliable over this time interval. Respectively correlations were .90, .90, .93, .89. All correlations were statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  or better level. Finally, mean scores were computed by sex for the two normative samples. Males scored significantly higher than females on the Masculinity Scale ( $p < .001$ ) while females scored significantly higher than males on the Femininity Scale ( $p < .001$ ).

#### The Performance Self-Esteem Scale

The Performance Self-Esteem Scale (PSES) was developed by Jayne E. Stake in 1979 to measure self-evaluations of ability and performance (Appendix B). The PSES was based upon the argument that global self-esteem measures were too general to allow for specific behavioral predictions. Therefore, specific self-esteem measures that identify

separate aspects or types of self-esteem were needed (Simpson & Boyle, 1975).

The PSES is a self-rating instrument on which respondents are asked to indicate, using a seven point Likert scale, the extent to which each of 47 items are self-descriptive. Possible responses range from one to seven. A response of one indicates the item is "never or almost never true" for the respondent. A response of seven indicates the item is "always or almost always true" for the respondent.

The PSES contains a 40 item performance self-esteem scale that relates to ability and performance. Scoring procedures indicate whether each of these 40 items is scored in a positive or negative direction. The PSES also contains a seven item social self-esteem scale. These seven items relate to the respondents' perceptions of how they are liked by others. A total performance self-esteem score is derived for each respondent by summing the responses to the positive performance self-esteem items, summing the responses to the negative performance self-esteem items, and subtracting the sum of the negative items from the sum of the positive items.

For the purposes of this study the performance self-esteem scores of all respondents were divided into quartiles to determine the respondents self-esteem classifications. Those respondents whose scores fell above the first quartile were classified as high-high self-esteem. Those respondents whose scores fell below the first quartile but above the second quartile were classified high-low self-esteem. Those respondents whose scores fell below the second quartile but above the third quartile were classified low-high self-esteem. Those respondents

whose scores fell below the third quartile were classified low-low self-esteem.

A check of the internal consistency of the PSES using 35 male and 54 female undergraduate students revealed a coefficient alpha of .90. The discriminative validity of the PSES was tested in three ways. First, the relationship between the performance self-esteem score and the sum of the social self-esteem items was examined. Since both represent aspects of overall self-evaluation, the relationship was expected to be low but positive. The Pearson correlation between the two measures was  $+ .27$  ( $p < .01$ ) for the same sample of 89 undergraduates that supplied the reliability data. The author concluded that this finding offered evidence that the PSES measures a separate and distinct factor of self-esteem.

Stake next examined the relationship between the PSES and a defensive response set. Forty-four male and 44 female undergraduates were administered the PSES and the K subscale of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory. The K scale taps defensiveness in responding and is associated with high global self-esteem and adjustment (Dahlstrom, Welsh, & Dahlstrom, 1972). The correlation between the PSES and the K scale was expected to be low but positive as both measure aspects of self-esteem. The Pearson correlation was found to be  $+ .25$  ( $p < .05$ ) indicating the PSES was not closely related to this measure of defensiveness.

A third concern was that the PSES measure self-evaluations independent of general sex role attitudes. This concern was due to the PSES including many items that represent traits and behaviors considered nontraditional for women. A sample of 80 female and 94 male

undergraduates completed the PSES and Attitudes Toward Women Scale (Spence & Helmrich, 1972). This instrument measures traditionality of sex role attitudes. The correlation was not significant for females ( $r = +.04$ ) or males ( $r = -.10$ ) indicating the PSES measures self-evaluations that are independent of general sex role attitudes.

### The Causal Attribution Scale

The Causal Attribution Scale (CAS) Forms A and B is a structured rating measure developed by this researcher to assess causal attributions for self-reported performance outcomes (Appendix C). The original form of the CAS was developed to evaluate the extent to which respondents perceive the causal factors ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty as responsible for their performance outcomes. The final form of the CAS used in this investigation was expanded to examine a broader range of causal factors than the four factors typically investigated in attribution research.

The CAS is a self-administering paper and pencil instrument that has three sections. The first section of form A requires respondents describe a time when they were very successful in their present positions. Section two asks respondents to characterize this experience according to one of the following three achievement areas: interpersonal event, intrapersonal-affiliative event, mastery-control event.

Finally in section three, respondents are asked to rate on a five point Likert scale the extent to which each of the following nine factors was responsible for their successful performance outcomes: ability, typical effort, mood at time of task, immediate effort, task ease/difficulty, luck, interest in task, supervisor, help from others.

A response of one indicates the factor was not at all a cause of the experience reported. A response of five indicates the factor was very much a cause of the experience reported. Form B asks respondents to provide answers to the same three sections for a time they were very unsuccessful in their present positions.

To obtain an external evaluation of the content validity of the CAS, 10 experts were asked to examine the original CAS and evaluate its relevancy to this research. These 10 experts were chosen based upon their publications and research in the area of sex differences and causal attributions. Each expert was sent a letter introducing this researcher, the purpose of the research, and requesting assistance (Appendix D), the original CAS Forms A and B (Appendix E), and two evaluation forms one each for Forms A and B (Appendix F).

Each evaluation form corresponded to the CAS by section. The experts were asked to indicate whether each section was adequate as is, adequate with the following changes, or inadequate for the following reasons. Five of the 10 experts contacted responded to the request for assistance in establishing the content validity of the CAS. Of the five experts, for both Forms A and B four said section one was adequate as is, four said section two was adequate as is, and five said section three was adequate as is. One expert said section one and section two were inadequate.

Although the majority of experts stated all three sections were adequate, several suggestions were offered that led to the final form of the CAS employed in this investigation. The experts' evaluations of the CAS are reported in full in Appendix G. Overall, the experts evaluating the CAS believed it to be adequate in assessing causal

attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes in naturalistic contexts thereby establishing the scales' content validity.

### The Demographic Information Questionnaire

The Demographic Information Questionnaire (DIQ) was developed by this researcher to obtain statistical data on the participants (Appendix H). The DIQ consists of four fill-in questions requesting the following information: respondents' age, sex, educational level and primary job responsibility. Information concerning respondents' sex, educational level, and job responsibility was needed for accurate classification of subjects and for a final determination concerning respondents inclusion in the subject pool. The categories under educational level and primary job responsibility were those used by the American Mental Health Counselors Association to obtain their demographic membership information.

The Demographic Information Questionnaire is a self-administering paper and pencil instrument. Respondents are asked to either fill in a blank or select among several choices the appropriate answer to four questions.

### Procedures

A mailing list consisting of 1,000 American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA) members' names and addresses was purchased through the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA). These 1,000 names were randomly selected by APGA computer from the 2,500 AMHCA members who indicated on the AMHCA membership form their primary job responsibility as counselor.



Every other counselor from the 1,000 name mailing list was included in this study. This sampling procedure was repeated until 600 names were selected. These 600 counselors were mailed a packet containing a letter introducing this researcher, the purpose of the research, a request for participation in the study, and general instructions for completing the instruments (Appendix I), the Bem Sex Role Inventory, the Performance Self-Esteem Scale, the final form of the Causal Attribution Scale Forms A and B, the Demographic Information Questionnaire, and a stamped self-addressed envelope.

The general letter of instructions requested participants carefully read the individual instructions included with each instrument. Participants were asked not to omit any items answering each to the best of their capabilities. Instructions were also included to return all forms in the enclosed self-addressed envelope as soon as possible. Only those participants who adequately completed each instrument were included in the data analyses. Respondents indicating a primary job responsibility other than counselor and respondents with less than a master's degree were also excluded from the sample. To ensure anonymity, code numbers were assigned to each respondent.

#### Analyses of Data

One way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if differences existed in the causal attributions counselors used to explain their successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. One way analyses of variance were also used to determine if differences existed in the causal attributions counselors used to explain their successful performance outcomes when compared by their

sex role identities and when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Where significant main effects were found, Least Significant Differences (LSD) tests were conducted for follow-up analyses.

One way analyses of variance were used to determine if differences existed in the causal attributions counselors used to explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. One way analyses of variance were also used to determine if differences existed in the causal attributions counselors used to explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities and when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Where significant main effects were found, Least Significant Differences (LSD) tests were conducted for follow-up analyses.

#### Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study was the self-selection of counselors as participants. Counselors who chose to participate in this study may not be representative of counselors in general. A second limitation was the possibility that counselors' responses to the instruments were inaccurate or biased self-reports.

Although the sample for this survey was drawn from a nationwide population and attempts were made to establish the diversity of AMHCA's membership, there were no comparison groups in this study. Therefore, a third limitation of this study was that any conclusions drawn were limited to counselors who meet AMHCA's membership requirements and the requirements for inclusion in this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of counselors' sex, sex role identities, and levels of agentic self-esteem on their causal attributions for successful performance outcomes. One hundred and twenty-seven counselors participated in the study. Of that number, 62 were males and 65 were females. Participants completed the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), the Performance Self-Esteem Scale (PSES), the Causal Attribution Scale Forms A and B (CAS), and the Demographic Information Questionnaire (DIQ). Data analyses were conducted as outlined in Chapter Three.

#### Hypothesis One

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test this hypothesis. The results in Table 6 indicate there were no significant differences in the nine causal attributions counselors used to explain their successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex ( $p < .01$ ). These results mean male and female counselors did not attribute the causes of their successful performance outcomes to different factors. Therefore, the first null hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 6

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions for Counselors' Successful Performance Outcomes by Sex

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Ability	Sex	1	0.76322268	1.51
	Explained	1	0.76322268	
	Residual	125	63.33126551	
	TOTAL	126	64.09448819	
Typical Effort	Sex	1	4.34356695	5.13
	Explained	1	4.34356695	
	Residual	125	105.84540943	
	TOTAL	126	110.18897638	
Interest in Task	Sex	1	1.31228399	3.42
	Explained	1	1.31228399	
	Residual	124	47.54485887	
	TOTAL	125	48.85714286	
Immediate Effort	Sex	1	0.26030167	0.34
	Explained	1	0.26030167	
	Residual	125	94.62158809	
	TOTAL	126	94.88188976	
Mood at Time of Task	Sex	1	2.50371036	1.29
	Explained	125	2.50371036	
	Residual	125	242.85062035	
	TOTAL	126	245.35433071	
Supervisor	Sex	1	0.08138230	0.08
	Explained	1	0.08138230	
	Residual	117	115.90181098	
	TOTAL	118	115.98319328	
Good Luck	Sex	1	2.22365540	2.04
	Explained	1	2.22365540	
	Residual	124	135.07793190	
	TOTAL	125	137.30158730	
Task Ease	Sex	1	1.94994432	6.50
	Explained	1	1.94994432	
	Residual	125	37.48312655	
	TOTAL	126	39.43307087	
Help From Others	Sex	1	3.48765988	1.89
	Explained	1	3.48765988	
	Residual	124	229.36948298	
	TOTAL	125	232.85714286	

## Hypothesis Two

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test this hypothesis. The results in Table 7 reveal there were significant differences in counselors use of the attribution typical effort to explain their successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities ( $p < .01$ ). These results mean counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their typical effort when compared by their sex role identities.

Table 7

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Typical Effort Attribution for Counselors' Successful Performance Outcomes by Sex Role Identities

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Typical Effort	SRI	3	11.92296653	4.97*
	Explained	3	11.92296653	
	Residual	123	98.26600985	
	TOTAL	126	110.18897638	

Note: SRI is the abbreviation for sex role identities

\* $p < .01$

A Least Significant Differences test was conducted to further investigate these differences. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 8. Undifferentiated sex-typed counselors differed significantly from androgynous sex-typed counselors ( $p < .001$ ) and from masculine sex-typed counselors ( $p < .01$ ) in their use of the attribution

typical effort to explain their successful performance outcomes. These results mean undifferentiated sex-typed counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their typical effort as androgynous and masculine sex-typed counselors.

Table 9 shows the mean score of undifferentiated sex-typed counselors was significantly lower than the mean score of androgynous and masculine sex-typed counselors. While the mean score of undifferentiated sex-typed counselors was also lower than the mean score of feminine sex-typed counselors, this difference did not reach significance. These results mean undifferentiated sex-typed counselors were significantly less likely than the androgynous and masculine sex-typed counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort.

Table 8  
Least Significant Differences Test of Counselors'  
Sex-Role Identities for Typical Effort Attribution

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Estimate	T-Value
Typical Effort	Androgynous vs Masculine	0.17142857	0.80
	Androgynous vs Feminine	0.34285714	1.51
	Androgynous vs Undifferentiated	0.83054187	3.70**
	Masculine vs Feminine	0.17142857	0.76
	Masculine vs Undifferentiated	0.65911330	2.94*
	Feminine vs Undifferentiated	0.48768473	2.06

\*p < .01

\*\*p < .001

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Typical Effort Attribution  
by Counselors' Sex Role Identities

Causal Attribution	Group	N	Mean	SD
Typical Effort	Androgynous	35	4.4857	0.781
	Masculine	35	4.3142	0.832
	Feminine	28	4.1428	0.890
	Undifferentiated	29	3.6551	1.078

The results in Table 21 (Appendix J) reveal that counselors did not differ significantly in their use of the remaining eight causal attributions when compared by their sex role identities. Therefore, for the causal attribution typical effort, hypothesis two was rejected. For the remaining eight causal attributions investigated in this study, hypothesis two was not rejected.

### Hypothesis Three

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test this hypothesis. The results in Table 10 reveal there were significant differences in counselors use of the attributions ability ( $p < .001$ ) and typical effort ( $p < .0001$ ) to explain their successful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. These results mean counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their ability and typical effort when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

Table 10

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Ability and  
Typical Effort Attributions for Counselors' Successful  
Performance Outcomes by Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Ability	LASE	3	8.53327639	6.30*
	Explained	3	8.53327639	
	Residual	123	55.56121180	
	TOTAL	126	64.09448819	
Typical Effort	LASE	3	22.37411871	10.45**
	Explained	3	22.37411871	
	Residual	123	87.81485767	
	TOTAL	126	110.18897638	

Note: LASE is the abbreviation for levels of agentic self-esteem.

\*p < .001

\*\*p < .0001

Least Significant Differences tests were conducted to further investigate these differences. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 11. Low-low agentic self-esteem counselors differed significantly from high-low agentic self-esteem counselors ( $p < .0005$ ) and from high-high agentic self-esteem counselors ( $p < .0005$ ) in their use of the attribution ability to explain their successful performance outcomes. These results mean low-low agentic self-esteem counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their ability as high-low and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors.



Table 11 further reveals low-low agentic self-esteem counselors differed significantly from low-high, high-low, and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors in their use of the causal attribution typical effort to explain their successful performance outcomes ( $p < .0001$ ). These results mean low-low agentic self-esteem counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their typical effort as counselors with higher levels of agentic self-esteem.

Table 11

Least Significant Differences Tests of Counselors' Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem for Ability and Typical Effort Attributions

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Estimate	T-Value
Ability	Low-low vs Low-high	-0.39338493	-1.92
	Low-low vs High-low	-0.58823529	-3.58*
	Low-low vs High-high	-0.65517241	-3.83*
	Low-high vs High-low	-0.26565465	-1.59
	Low-high vs High-high	-0.33259177	-1.92
	High-low vs High-high	-0.06693712	-0.39
Typical Effort	Low-low vs Low-high	-0.86999022	-4.12**
	Low-low vs High-low	-0.83868093	-4.06**
	Low-low vs High-high	-1.10135841	-5.12**
	Low-high vs. High-high	0.03130930	0.15
	Low-high vs High-high	-0.23136819	-1.06
	High-low vs. High-high	-0.26267748	-1.23

\* $p < .0005$

\*\* $p < .0001$

Table 12 shows the mean score of low-low agentic self-esteem counselors was lower than the mean scores of high-low and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors for the attribution ability. While the mean score of the low-low agentic self-esteem counselors was also lower than the mean score of the low-high agentic self-esteem counselors, this difference did not reach significance. These results mean low-low agentic self-esteem counselors were significantly less likely than the high-low and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their ability.

Table 12 further reveals the mean score of the low-low agentic self-esteem counselors was significantly lower than the mean scores of the low-high, high-low, and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors for the causal attribution typical effort. These results mean low-low agentic self-esteem counselors were significantly less likely than the low-high, high-low and high-high agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort.

The results in Table 22 (Appendix J) reveal that counselors did not differ significantly in their use of the remaining seven causal attributions when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Therefore, for the causal attributions ability and typical effort, hypothesis three was rejected. For the remaining seven causal attributions investigated in this study, hypothesis three was not rejected.

#### Hypothesis Four

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations for Ability and Typical Effort  
Attributions by Counselors' Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Group	N	Mean	SD
Ability	Low-low	33	4.0000	0.790
	Low-high	31	4.3225	0.701
	High-low	34	4.5882	0.608
	High-high	29	4.6551	0.552
Typical Effort	Low-low	33	3.4848	1.064
	Low-high	31	4.3548	0.709
	High-low	34	4.3235	0.806
	High-high	29	4.5862	0.732

this hypothesis. The results in Table 13 indicate there were no significant differences in the nine causal attributions counselors used to explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex ( $p < .01$ ). These results mean male and female counselors did not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful performance outcomes to different factors. Therefore, hypothesis four was not rejected.

#### Hypothesis Five

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test this hypothesis. The results in Table 14 indicate there were no significant differences in the nine causal attributions

Table 13

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions for  
Counselors' Unsuccessful Performance Outcomes by Sex

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Inability	Sex	1	4.49169119	3.12
	Explained	1	4.49169119	
	Residual	125	178.61941992	
	TOTAL	126	183.11111111	
Typical Effort	Sex	1	3.79801107	2.88
	Explained	1	3.79801107	
	Residual	125	163.69405242	
	TOTAL	126	167.49206349	
Interest in Task	Sex	1	2.76684207	1.68
	Explained	1	2.76684707	
	Residual	125	205.28039702	
	TOTAL	126	208.04724409	
Immediate Effort	Sex	1	2.84174987	1.59
	Explained	1	2.84174987	
	Residual	125	223.26848635	
	TOTAL	126	226.11023622	
Mood at Time of Task	Sex	1	1.34925265	0.63
	Explained	1	1.34925265	
	Residual	125	267.98933002	
	TOTAL	126	269.33858268	
Supervisor	Sex	1	0.07340148	0.11
	Explained	1	0.07340148	
	Residual	125	82.80263158	
	TOTAL	126	82.87603306	
Bad Luck	Sex	1	0.02813544	0.04
	Explained	1	0.02813544	
	Residual	125	87.57816377	
	TOTAL	126	87.60629921	
Task Difficulty	Sex	1	7.89374963	4.09
	Explained	1	7.89374963	
	Residual	125	241.52357320	
	TOTAL	126	249.41732283	
Lack of Help From Others	Sex	1	3.02599366	1.35
	Explained	1	3.02599366	
	Residual	125	277.33114919	
	TOTAL	126	280.35714286	

Table 14

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions for  
Counselors' Unsuccessful Performance Outcomes by Sex Role Identities

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Inability	SRI	3	9.53606040	2.23
	Explained	3	9.53606040	
	Residual	122	173.57505071	
	TOTAL	125	183.11111111	
Typical Effort	SRI	3	5.64226633	1.42
	Explained	3	5.64226633	
	Residual	122	161.84979716	
	TOTAL	125	167.49206349	
Interest in Task	SRI	3	2.53886971	0.51
	Explained	3	2.53886971	
	Residual	123	205.50837438	
	TOTAL	126	208.04724409	
Immediate Effort	SRI	3	7.29742834	1.37
	Explained	3	7.29742834	
	Residual	123	218.81280788	
	TOTAL	126	226.11023622	
Mood at Time of Task	SRI	3	6.44400140	1.00
	Explained	3	6.44400140	
	Residual	123	262.89458128	
	TOTAL	126	269.33858268	
Supervisor	SRI	3	3.91428571	0.58
	Explained	3	3.91428571	
	Residual	117	276.44285714	
	TOTAL	120	280.35714286	
Bad Luck	SRI	3	2.75038788	1.33
	Explained	3	2.75038788	
	Residual	123	84.85591133	
	TOTAL	126	87.60629921	
Task Difficulty	SRI	3	12.87446569	2.23
	Explained	3	12.87446569	
	Residual	123	236.54285714	
	TOTAL	126	249.41732283	
Lack of Help From Others	SRI	3	3.91428571	0.58
	Explained	3	3.91428571	
	Residual	122	276.44285714	
	TOTAL	125	280.35714286	

counselors used to explain unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. These results mean androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated sex-typed counselors did not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful performance outcomes to different factors. Therefore, hypothesis five was not rejected.

#### Hypothesis Six

There are no significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Nine one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test this hypothesis. The results in Table 15 reveal there were significant differences in counselors use of the attribution immediate effort to explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem ( $p < .01$ ). These results mean counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their immediate effort when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

Table 15

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Immediate  
Effort Attribution for Counselors' Unsuccessful  
Performance Outcomes by Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Immediate Effort	LASE	3	23.40979564	4.74*
	Explained	3	23.40979564	
	Residual	123	202.70044058	
	TOTAL	126	226.11023622	

\* $p < .01$

A Least Significant Differences test was conducted to further investigate these differences. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 16. High-high agentic self-esteem counselors differed significantly from low-low and low-high agentic self-esteem counselors in their use of the causal attribution immediate effort to explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes ( $p < .01$ ). These results mean high-high agentic self-esteem counselors did not assign the same causal responsibility to their immediate effort as low-low and low-high agentic self-esteem counselors.

Table 16

Least Significant Differences Test of Counselors' Levels of  
Agentic Self-Esteem for Immediate Effort Attribution

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Estimate	T-Value
Immediate Effort	Low-low vs Low-high	-0.13978495	-0.44
	Low-low vs High-low	0.57843137	1.84
	Low-low vs High-high	0.94252874	2.88*
	Low-high vs High-low	0.71821632	2.25
	Low-high vs High-high	1.08231368	3.26*
	High-low vs High-high	0.36409736	1.12

\* $p < .01$

Table 17 shows the mean score of high-high agentic self-esteem counselors was significantly lower than the mean scores of low-low and low-high agentic self-esteem counselors for the causal attribution immediate effort. While the mean score of the high-high agentic

self-esteem counselors was also lower than the mean score of the high-low agentic self-esteem counselors, this difference did not reach significance. These results mean high-high agentic self-esteem counselors were significantly less likely than low-low and low-high agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their unsuccessful outcomes to their immediate effort.

Table 17  
Means and Standard Deviations for Immediate Effort  
Attribution by Counselors' Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Group	N	Mean	SD
Immediate Effort	Low-low	33	2.6666	1.290
	Low-high	31	2.8064	1.352
	High-low	34	2.0882	1.311
	High-High	29	1.7241	1.161

The results in Table 23 (Appendix J) reveal that counselors did not differ significantly in their use of the remaining eight causal attributions when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Therefore, for the causal attribution immediate effort, hypothesis six was rejected. For the remaining eight causal attributions investigated in this study, hypothesis six was not rejected.

#### Additional Results

To investigate the relationship between type of experience reported and subsequent causal attributions assigned to performance outcomes, counselors were asked to classify their successful and unsuccessful



performance outcomes according to achievement domain. The results in Table 18 reveal the largest percentage of counselors classified their successful performance outcomes as interpersonal-affiliative events. While this was also true for the unsuccessful performance outcomes, more than twice as many counselors also classified their unsuccessful outcomes as intrapersonal or mastery-control events.

Table 18

Classification of Counselors' Successful and Unsuccessful  
Performance Outcomes by Achievement Domains

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME	ACHIEVEMENT DOMAIN		
	Intrapersonal Event	Interpersonal- Affiliative Event	Mastery-Control Event
Successful Performance Outcome	9 7.90%	108 85.04%	10 7.87%
Unsuccessful Performance Outcome	24 18.90%	81 63.78%	22 17.32%

The relationship of causal attributions to achievement domains was investigated by examining the frequencies of responses to the nine causal factors for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes. Results in Table 19 indicate for counselors' successful performance outcomes, patterns emerged in the causal responsibility assigned to their typical effort and mood at time of task when compared by achievement domains.

Fifty percent of counselors reporting mastery-control events indicated their typical effort was either very much or quite a cause of their successful outcomes as compared to 88.8 percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal events and 82.4 percent of counselors reporting

Table 19

Distribution of Responses to Causal Attributions for  
Counselors' Successful Performance Outcomes by Achievement Domains

ACHIEVEMENT DOMAINS	RESPONSES				
	Not At All a Cause	Somewhat a Cause	A Cause	Quite a Cause	Very Much a Cause
<u>Ability</u>					
Intrapersonal	0%	0%	11.11%	22.22%	66.67%
Interpersonal	0%	0.93%	12.04%	37.04%	50.00%
Mastery/Control	0%	0%	0%	50.00%	50.00%
<u>Typical Effort</u>					
Intrapersonal	0%	0%	11.11%	22.22%	66.67%
Interpersonal	1.85%	2.78%	12.96%	37.96%	44.44%
Mastery/Control	10.00%	0%	40.00%	30.00%	20.00%
<u>Interest in Task</u>					
Intrapersonal	0%	0%	0%	44.00%	55.56%
Interpersonal	0%	0.93%	4.67%	31.78%	62.62%
Mastery/Control	0%	0%	10.00%	10.00%	80.00%
<u>Immediate Effort</u>					
Intrapersonal	0%	11.11%	11.11%	55.56%	33.33%
Interpersonal	2.78%	11.11%	11.11%	24.07%	62.04%
Mastery/Control	0%	10.00%	10.00%	30.00%	60.00%
<u>Mood at Time of Task</u>					
Intrapersonal	33.33%	11.11%	11.11%	33.33%	11.11%
Interpersonal	15.74%	12.04%	25.00%	23.15%	24.07%
Mastery/Control	10.00%	20.00%	0%	30.00%	40.00%
<u>Supervisor</u>					
Intrapersonal	75.00%	0%	25.00%	0%	0%
Interpersonal	63.73%	17.65%	10.78%	5.88%	1.96%
Mastery/Control	66.67%	22.22%	11.11%	0%	0%
<u>Good Luck</u>					
Intrapersonal	55.56%	33.33%	11.11%	0%	0%
Interpersonal	61.68%	21.50%	9.35%	2.80%	4.67%
Mastery/Control	50.00%	20.00%	20.00%	10.00%	0%
<u>Task Ease</u>					
Intrapersonal	88.89%	0%	11.11%	0%	0%
Interpersonal	82.41%	12.96%	4.63%	0%	0%
Mastery/Control	70.00%	10.00%	20.00%	0%	0%
<u>Help From Others</u>					
Intrapersonal	66.67%	11.11%	11.11%	0%	11.11%
Interpersonal	42.06%	18.69%	15.89%	14.02%	9.35%
Mastery/Control	40.00%	40.00%	0%	20.00%	0%

interpersonal events. Seventy percent of counselors reporting mastery-control events indicated their mood at time of task was either very much or quite a cause of their successful outcomes as compared to 44.4 percent and 47.2 percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal and interpersonal events respectively.

Results in Table 20 indicate for Counselors' unsuccessful performance outcomes patterns emerged in the causal responsibility assigned to their inability, typical effort, interest in task, immediate effort, and mood at time of task when compared by achievement domains. Over thirty-six percent of counselors reporting mastery-control events indicated their inability was either very much or quite a cause of their unsuccessful outcomes as compared to 12.5 percent 17.5 percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal and interpersonal events respectively.

Twenty-five percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal events indicated their typical effort was either very much or quite a cause of their unsuccessful performance outcomes as compared to 11.2 percent and 9.0 percent of counselors reporting interpersonal and mastery-control events respectively. Over four percent of counselors reporting mastery-control events indicated their immediate effort was either very much or quite a cause of their unsuccessful outcomes as compared to 29.1 percent and 22.2 percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal and interpersonal events respectively. Over four percent of counselors reporting mastery-control events indicated their mood at time of task was either very much or quite a cause of their successful outcomes as compared to 54.1 percent and 19.7 percent of counselors reporting intrapersonal and interpersonal events respectively.

Table 20

Distribution of Responses to Causal Attributions for Counselors' Unsuccessful Performance Outcomes by Achievement Domains

ACHIEVEMENT DOMAINS	RESPONSES				
	Not At All a Cause	Somewhat a Cause	A Cause	Quite a Cause	Very Much a Cause
<u>Inability</u>					
Intrapersonal	25.00%	37.50%	25.00%	8.33%	4.17%
Interpersonal	26.25%	35.00%	21.25%	11.25%	6.25%
Mastery/Control	18.18%	27.27%	18.18%	18.18%	18.18%
<u>Typical Effort</u>					
Intrapersonal	33.33%	25.00%	16.67%	20.83%	4.17%
Interpersonal	53.75%	22.50%	12.50%	8.75%	2.50%
Mastery/Control	59.09%	9.09%	27.27%	0%	4.55%
<u>Interest in Task</u>					
Intrapersonal	33.33%	33.33%	8.33%	0%	25.00
Interpersonal	61.73%	16.05%	11.11%	7.41%	3.70%
Mastery/Control	59.09%	13.64%	18.18%	0%	9.09%
<u>Immediate Effort</u>					
Intrapersonal	29.17%	16.67%	25.00%	12.50%	16.67%
Interpersonal	39.51%	25.93%	12.35%	11.11%	11.11%
Mastery/Control	36.36%	22.73%	36.36%	4.55%	0%
<u>Mood at Time of Task</u>					
Intrapersonal	12.50%	25.00%	8.33%	16.67%	37.50%
Interpersonal	43.21%	19.75%	17.28%	8.64%	11.11%
Mastery/Control	63.64%	18.18%	13.64%	0%	4.55%
<u>Supervisor</u>					
Intrapersonal	81.82%	9.09%	0%	9.09%	0%
Interpersonal	89.61%	3.90%	3.90%	0%	2.60%
Mastery/Control	77.27%	9.09%	9.09%	0%	4.55%
<u>Bad Luck</u>					
Intrapersonal	87.50%	8.33%	4.17%	0%	0%
Interpersonal	75.31%	16.05%	3.70%	2.47%	2.47%
Mastery/Control	77.27%	9.09%	4.55%	9.09%	0%
<u>Task Difficulty</u>					
Intrapersonal	16.67%	16.67%	12.50%	33.33%	20.83%
Interpersonal	12.35%	8.64%	13.58%	27.16%	38.27%
Mastery/Control	18.18%	13.64%	9.09%	36.36%	22.73%
<u>Lack of Help From Others</u>					
Intrapersonal	58.33%	8.33%	25.00%	4.17%	4.17%
Interpersonal	48.75%	12.50%	10.00%	11.25%	17.50%
Mastery/Control	40.91%	22.73%	13.64%	9.09%	13.64%

### Discussion

The results of this study indicate male and female counselors do not attribute the causes of their successful performance outcomes to different factors. The findings support the conclusions of McHugh, Frieze, and Hanusa (1982) that widely held beliefs concerning sex differences in attributions are unwarranted. This finding also supports the contention that attribution research should expand beyond investigating sex differences to examining individual differences within male and female groups.

Significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes were found when compared by their sex role identities. Undifferentiated sex-typed counselors attributed their successful outcomes to their typical effort significantly less than androgynous or masculine sex-typed counselors. Weiner's (1979) three dimensional taxonomy of causes classifies typical effort as an internal, stable, and controllable factor. Attribution theory contends internal factors are associated with high self-worth, stable factors with future expectancies for success, and controllable factors with appropriate interpersonal judgements.

It is not surprising that undifferentiated sex-typed counselors attributed their successful performance outcomes to their typical effort less than counselors in the other sex-typed groups. An undifferentiated sex-type classification results from a low endorsement of both the masculine and feminine characteristics contained in the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Counselors unwilling to rate themselves high on either masculine or feminine attributes would not be expected to assign

successful outcomes to an attribution that indicates acceptance of personal responsibility for achievement.

Significant differences in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes were found when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Self-consistency theory purports individuals are motivated to interpret achievement events in ways that allow them to maintain consistent self-beliefs. High self-esteem persons are expected to attribute success to causal factors that reinforce their positive self-image. Low self-esteem persons are expected to exhibit reverse patterns of causality.

Results of this study indicate counselors with lower agentic self-esteem ascribed their successful outcomes less to both ability and typical effort than counselors with higher agentic self-esteem. Since the assignment of causality to these factors indicates an acceptance of personal responsibility for success, these findings are congruent with self-consistency theory. However, self-consistency theory also predicts low self-esteem persons will assign causality for their successful outcomes to factors indicating low acceptance of personal responsibility such as task ease or good luck. Results of this study did not support this second prediction. Counselors did not differ in their use of the remaining seven factors investigated in this study when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

Traditionally, attribution research has focused on investigating the four causal factors originally identified by Weiner et al (1971): ability, effort, luck, and task difficulty. In recent investigations less conventional researchers employing open-ended response methodologies have concluded the assignment of causal responsibility is

not limited to these four factors alone. However, the findings of this study indicate the original intuitions of Weiner and his colleagues may be correct. While a potentially unlimited number of factors may exist that can explain success, this study revealed typical effort and ability are the most salient and generally recognized of causes.

Male and female counselors did not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful performance outcomes to different factors. This finding is congruent with the absence of sex differences found in attributions for successful performance outcomes and further substantiates the McHugh, Frieze, and Hanusa (1982) conclusion that sex differences in achievement behaviors will not be explained through identifying sex differences in causal attributions.

The expectation that attributional patterns would be distinguished by sex role identities for unsuccessful performance outcomes was not proven. Androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated sex-typed counselors did not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful performance outcomes to different factors. This finding is puzzling in view of the significant differences found in counselors' attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities.

Several authors have suggested that problems exist with the assessment of causality for unsuccessful outcomes. Previous investigations have revealed differences in causal ascriptions for successful outcomes that did not find significant differences in attributions for unsuccessful outcomes (Teglasi, 1978; Travis et al., 1982). One explanation for this could be that the social stigma attached to unsuccessful performances may inhibit the self-evaluations

that occur for successful outcomes. Therefore, no patterns of causality emerge.

Significant differences in counselors causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes were found when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. High agentic self-esteem counselors ascribed their unsuccessful outcomes significantly less to their immediate effort than counselors with lower levels of agentic self-esteem. Once again, these findings lend partial support to self-consistency theory.

Self-consistency theory contends to maintain congruent self-beliefs, high self-esteem persons will ascribe unsuccessful performance outcomes to external sources of causality and low self-esteem persons will ascribe unsuccessful outcomes to internal sources of causality. The results of this study revealed high agentic self-esteem counselors distinguished themselves from counselors in the lower half of the agentic self-esteem distribution by their unwillingness to identify their immediate effort, an internal attribution, as responsible for their lack of success. While these high self-esteem counselors did not assign responsibility to external sources any more than lower self-esteem counselors, they did indicate their beliefs that an internal factor was not responsible for their unsuccessful outcomes.

From these results it is difficult to determine just how counselors explained their unsuccessful performance outcomes. The only pattern that clearly emerges is that higher agentic self-esteem counselors were more certain than lower agentic self-esteem counselors their immediate effort was not responsible for their unsuccessful outcomes. However,



this finding provides little information on how counselors with any level of agentic self-esteem explain their unsuccessful performance outcomes. From these findings it is reasonable to conject that methodologies revealing significant differences in causal attributions for successful performance outcomes may be invalid for assessing causality for unsuccessful performance outcomes.

Assessment of achievement domain classifications revealed the largest percentage of counselors classified their successful performance outcomes as interpersonal-affiliative events. In fact, the distribution was so heavily weighted in this category that it is difficult to reach meaningful conclusions concerning the relationship between achievement domains and causal attributions. One pattern that does emerge is that counselors reporting mastery-control events evidenced a stronger tendency toward externality than counselors reporting intrapersonal or interpersonal-affiliative events.

Counselors reporting mastery-control events were less likely to attribute their success to their typical effort and more likely to attribute causal responsibility to their mood at the time of the task than counselors in the other two domains. This may be due to the same reasons the majority of counselors classified their successful performance outcomes as interpersonal-affiliative events.

The counseling profession is dedicated to the enhancement of the potential of each individual and thus to the service of society (APGA, 1981). This dedication is reflected in counselors overwhelming classification of their successful performance outcomes as interpersonal-affiliative events and subsequent attributions to factors indicating an acceptance of personal responsibility. Perhaps

counselors reporting successful outcomes in the mastery-control classification indicated less acceptance of personal responsibility because these experiences were unusual for them.

As was true for successful performance outcomes, the largest percentage of counselors classified their unsuccessful performance outcomes as interpersonal-affiliative events. Counselors reporting mastery-control events distinguished themselves by a strong tendency to attribute causal responsibility for their lack of success to their inability. Once again it seems counselors reporting mastery-control events appear less secure than counselors reporting experiences in the other two achievement domains.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, SUMMARY, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Differences do not exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. Male and female counselors do not attribute the causes of their successful outcomes to different factors.
2. Differences do exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Undifferentiated sex-typed counselors were less likely than the androgynous and masculine sex-typed counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort.
3. Differences do exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Counselors with lower levels of agentic self-esteem were less likely than the higher level agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their successful outcomes to their typical effort and ability.
4. Differences do not exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. Male and female counselors do not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful outcomes to different factors.

5. Differences do not exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Androgynous, masculine, feminine, and undifferentiated sex-typed counselors do not attribute the causes of their unsuccessful outcomes to different factors.
6. Differences do exist in counselors' causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem. Counselors with higher levels of agentic self-esteem were less likely than the lower level agentic self-esteem counselors to attribute their unsuccessful outcomes to their immediate effort.

#### Implications

The results of this study have important implications for future directions in attribution research. Researchers should begin to examine individual differences and the effects of various personality variables on causal attributions. In this study, differences in levels of agentic self-esteem proved to be significant in identifying attributional patterns. Researchers should conduct investigations that assess the relationship between causal attributions and personality factors not yet considered.

A second implication of this study is that researchers should consider the effects of situational variables on causal attributions to distinguish between situations that elicit differential attributional responses. Attributions made in one situation may not be representative of an enduring disposition to make the same type of attributions in other situations. The indication of differences in associations between achievement domains and causal attributions

implies that characteristics of the performance outcome reported may be more influential in determining attributions than characteristics of the individual. Attribution research has not yet adequately addressed this possibility.

A third implication of this study is that methodologies employed to assess causal attributions for successful performance outcomes may be invalid for assessing causal attributions for unsuccessful performance outcomes. Researchers should devise studies that investigate whether or not the same process used to assign causality for successful outcomes is applied to unsuccessful outcomes. In this study clearer attributional patterns emerged for successful performances than for unsuccessful ones. This could be due to differences in perceived causality of successful and unsuccessful experiences or because the research procedure employed did not adequately assess both types of outcomes.

A final implication of this study is that mental health professionals should be aware of the relationship between causal attributions and sex role identities and levels of agentic self-esteem. Assignment of causality to a particular attribution indicates individuals' perceptions of responsibility for their performance outcomes. Mental health professionals who recognize the tendency of undifferentiated sex-typed and low self-esteem clients to discount personal characteristics as the cause of their successes, may be better equipped to facilitate growth in these clients. Encouraging acceptance of personal control over life experiences would be particularly helpful with clients with histories of underachievement.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to expand attribution research from examining sex differences to investigating individual differences in causal attributions. This study investigated the effects of counselors' sex, sex role identities, and levels of agentic self-esteem on their causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, need for the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study were presented in Chapter One.

Chapter Two reviewed the literature related to attribution theory, sex roles, self-esteem, and traditional and nontraditional career women. The sections included under attribution theory were theoretical background, theoretical models, studies revealing sex differences in causal attributions, studies revealing no sex differences in causal attributions, and future directions for attribution research. The sections included under self-esteem were theoretical background, self-systems, and multidimensional theories of self-esteem.

Chapter Three described the hypotheses, population and sample, instruments, procedures, analyses of data, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Four presented the results and a discussion of these results. The findings of this study indicate differences do not exist in counselors' causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex. Differences in counselors' causal attributions emerged for their successful performance outcomes but not for their unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their sex role identities. Differences in counselors' causal attributions emerged for both their successful and

unsuccessful performance outcomes when compared by their levels of agentic self-esteem.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the results of this study, the following research studies are suggested :

1. A replication study of this research should be conducted to examine the reliability of these findings. Replication should be conducted under conditions approximately equivalent to this study. Replication studies that vary the occupational group could provide useful information as to whether the differences in causal attributions found in this study are unique to counselors or whether they are generalizable in scope.
2. A correlational study should be conducted to investigate the relationship between attributions for performance outcomes and differential achievement-related behaviors. The relationship between achievement and causal attributions has not been adequately investigated.
3. A study should be conducted to investigate the differential consequence of attributions for men and women. It is possible that differences exist in the consequences men and women experience when assigning a particular attribution to explain performance. If differences do exist they may provide insights into why sex differences in achievement behaviors continue to occur.
4. A study should be conducted to investigate whether or not persons assign causal responsibility for their successful performance outcomes in the same manner that they assign causal responsibility for their unsuccessful performance outcomes.

APPENDIX A  
BEM SEX-ROLE INVENTORY

INSTRUCTIONS: On the opposite side of this sheet, you will find listed a number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use those characteristics to describe yourself, that is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you each of these characteristics is. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

EXAMPLE:

Write a 1 if it is NEVER or ALMOST NEVER TRUE.

Write a 2 if it is USUALLY NOT TRUE.

Write a 3 if it is SOMETIMES BUT INFREQUENTLY TRUE.

Write a 4 if it is OCCASIONALLY TRUE.

Write a 5 if it is OFTEN TRUE.

Write a 6 if it is USUALLY TRUE.

Write a 7 if it is ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE.

MARK ALL ITEMS!



1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>						
Never or almost never true	Usually not true	Sometimes but infrequently true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	Always or almost always true

Defend my own beliefs	
Affectionate	
Conscientious	
Independent	
Sympathetic	
Moody	
Assertive	
Sensitive to needs of others	
Reliable	
Strong	
Understanding	
Jealous	
Forceful	
Compassionate	

Adaptable	
Dominant	
Tender	
Conceited	
Willing to	
Love children	
Tactful	
Aggressive	
Gentle	
Conventional	
Self-reliant	
Yielding	
Helpful	
Athletic	

Flatterable	
Theatrical	
Self-sufficient	
Loyal	
Happy	
Individualistic	
Soft-spoken	
Unpredictable	
Masculine	
Gullible	
Solemn	
Competitive	
Childlike	
Likable	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never or almost never true	Usually not true	Sometimes but infrequently true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	Always or almost always true

Truthful	
Have leadership abilities	
Eager to soothe hurt feelings	
Secretive	
Willing to take risks	
Warm	

Cheerful	
Unsystematic	
Analytical	
Shy	
Inefficient	
Make decisions easily	

Ambitious	
Do not use harsh language	
Sincere	
Act as a leader	
Feminine	
Friendly	

APPENDIX B  
THE PERFORMANCE SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

On the opposite side of this sheet is a list of descriptions about people. For each, please indicate how true the description is of you in this way:

Mark a 1 if it is NEVER OR ALMOST NEVER TRUE of you.

Mark a 2 if it is USUALLY NOT TRUE of you.

Mark a 3 if it is SOMETIMES BUT INFREQUENTLY TRUE of you.

Mark a 4 if it is OCCASIONALLY TRUE of you.

Mark a 5 if it is OFTEN TRUE of you.

Mark a 6 if it is USUALLY TRUE of you.

Mark a 7 if it is ALWAYS OR ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE of you.

MARK ALL ITEMS!

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never or almost never true	Usually not true	Sometimes but infrequently true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	Always or almost always true

Productive	
Assertive	
Friendly	
Tough	
Clever	
Creative	
Self critical	
Able to give orders	
Nervous	
Businesslike	
Self-sufficient	
Logical	

Self reliant	
Easily hurt	
Good sense of humor	
Inefficient	
Enjoys a challenge	
Pleasant	
Persuasive	
Has initiative	
Willing to take risks	
Powerful	
Acts as a leader	
Intelligent	

Pessimistic	
Good business sense	
Individualistic	
Willing to take a stand	
Makes a mistake when flustered	
Gullible	
Sociable	
Ambitious	
Yielding	
Fun to be with	
Headed for success	
Avoids competition	

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never or almost never true	Usually not true	Sometimes but infrequently true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	Always or almost always true

Likes responsibility	
Neighborly	
Feels good about about own accomplishments	

Self- conscious	
Warm	
Unstable	
Able to put ideas across	

Competent	
Lack confidence	
Indecisive	
Forceful	

APPENDIX C

FINAL CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM (A)

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY, THEN ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAGE.

QUESTIONS

1. Remember a time you were very successful in your present position as a counselor. Describe this successful experience, clearly presenting the most important aspects. Write about only one experience.

2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLEARLY CHARACTERIZES THE EXPERIENCE YOU WROTE ABOUT? CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience was primarily something within myself; my feelings about myself, my understanding of the kind of person I am.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience primarily involved an interaction or involvement with another person or group of people.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience was primarily one that required me to master or control something such as completing a project or learning a new skill.

3. FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WERE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WERE EACH OF THESE FACTORS THE CAUSE OF THIS SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE?

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not at all a Cause	Somewhat a Cause	A Cause	Quite a Cause	Very much a Cause

YOUR GENERAL ABILITY	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR TYPICAL EFFORT *	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR INTEREST IN THE TASK	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR IMMEDIATE EFFORT **	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR MOOD AT THE TIME OF TASK	1	2	3	4	5
YOUR SUPERVISOR	1	2	3	4	5
GOOD LUCK	1	2	3	4	5
TASK WAS EASY	1	2	3	4	5
HELP FROM OTHERS	1	2	3	4	5

\* Typical Effort refers to your usual level of exertion; how hard do you try in general at a task.

\*\* Immediate Effort refers to how hard you tried at this particular task. Typical and immediate effort may or may not be the same.

FINAL CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM (B)

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY, THEN ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAGE.

QUESTIONS

1. Remember a time you were very unsuccessful in your present position as a counselor. Describe this unsuccessful experience, clearly presenting the most important aspects. Write about only one experience.

2. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLEARLY CHARACTERIZES THE EXPERIENCE YOU WROTE ABOUT? CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience was primarily something within myself; my feelings about myself, my understanding of the kind of person I am.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience primarily involved an interaction or involvement with another person or group of people.

\_\_\_\_\_ The experience was primarily one that required me to master or control something such as completing a project or learning a new skill.



3. FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WERE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LACK OF SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WERE EACH OF THESE FACTORS THE CAUSE OF THIS UNSUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE?

USE THE FOLLOWING SCALE TO RATE <u>EACH</u> FACTOR. CIRCLE A NUMBER ON EACH LINE.				
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all a Cause	Somewhat a Cause	A Cause	Quite a a Cause	Very much a Cause

YOUR GENERAL ABILITY      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

YOUR TYPICAL EFFORT \*      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

YOUR INTEREST  
IN THE TASK      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

YOUR IMMEDIATE  
EFFORT \*\*      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

YOUR MOOD AT THE  
TIME OF TASK      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

YOUR SUPERVISOR      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

BAD LUCK      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

TASK WAS DIFFICULT      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

LACK OF HELP  
FROM OTHERS      1                      2                      3                      4                      5

\* Typical Effort refers to your usual level of exertion; how hard do you try in general at a task.

\*\* Immediate Effort refers to how hard you tried at this particular task. Typical and immediate effort may or may not be the same.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO ATTRIBUTION RESEARCHERS

Dear

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida in Counselor Education presently conducting my doctoral research. The title of my dissertation is "Individual Differences in Counselors' Causal Attributions for Performance Outcomes: Sex, Sex Role Identities and Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem."

I will be conducting a national survey of counselors belonging to the American Mental Health Counselors' Association. Six hundred counselors will receive a research packet including the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), the Performance Self-Esteem Scale (PSES), a Demographic Information Questionnaire (DIQ), and the Causal Attribution Scale (CAS) Forms A and B. I would like to ask your assistance in establishing the content validity of the Causal Attribution Scale which I developed to assess subjects' causal attributions for successful and unsuccessful performance outcomes.

I have enclosed copies of the Causal Attribution Scale Forms A and B and two evaluation forms. Each section of the evaluation forms correspond to a section of the CAS. There is a space at the end of each evaluation form for comments and additional feedback. Any suggestions you can make will be greatly appreciated.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mindy S. Hersh  
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures

APPENDIX E

ORIGINAL CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM (A)

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY, THEN ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAGE.

REMEMBER A TIME YOU WERE VERY SUCCESSFUL IN YOUR PRESENT POSITION AS A COUNSELOR. DESCRIBE THIS SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE, CLEARLY PRESENTING THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS. WRITE ABOUT ONLY ONE EXPERIENCE.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLOSELY CHARACTERIZES THE EXPERIENCE YOU WROTE ABOUT? CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER.

- ☐ The successful experience was primarily something within myself; my feelings about myself, my understanding of the kind of person I am.
- ☐ The successful experience primarily involved an interaction or involvement with another person or group of people.
- ☐ The successful experience was primarily one that required me to master or control something such as completing a project or learning a new skill.

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS YOUR ABILITY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS YOUR ABILITY THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause		Very much a cause	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS YOUR GOOD LUCK RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS YOUR GOOD LUCK THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause		Very much a cause	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS THE EFFORT YOU EXERTED RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE EFFORT YOU EXERTED THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause		Very much a cause	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS THE EASE OF THE TASK OR ASSIGNMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE EASE OF THE TASK OR ASSIGNMENT THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause		Very much a cause	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

ORIGINAL CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM (B)

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY, THEN ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS ON BOTH SIDES OF THIS PAGE.

REMEMBER A TIME YOU WERE VERY UNSUCCESSFUL IN YOUR PRESENT POSITION AS A COUNSELOR. DESCRIBE THIS UNSUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE, CLEARLY PRESENTING THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS. WRITE ABOUT ONLY ONE EXPERIENCE.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS MOST CLOSELY CHARACTERIZES THE EXPERIENCE YOU WROTE ABOUT? CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER.

- ☐ The unsuccessful experience was primarily something within myself; my feelings about myself, my understanding of the kind of person I am.
- ☐ The unsuccessful experience primarily involved an interaction or involvement with another person or group of people.
- ☐ The unsuccessful experience was primarily one that required me to master or control something such as completing a project or learning a new skill.

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS YOUR INABILITY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LACK OF SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS YOUR INABILITY THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause			Very much a cause
<hr/>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS YOUR BAD LUCK RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LACK OF SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS YOUR BAD LUCK THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause			Very much a cause
<hr/>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS YOUR LACK OF EFFORT RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LACK OF SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS YOUR LACK OF EFFORT THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause			Very much a cause
<hr/>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FOR THIS EXPERIENCE, HOW MUCH WAS THE DIFFICULTY OF THE TASK RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR LACK OF SUCCESS? TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE DIFFICULTY OF THE TASK THE CAUSE OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

Not at all a cause			Somewhat a cause			Very much a cause
<hr/>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX F  
EVALUATION FORM

The following questions refer to the Causal Attribution Scale From (A).

Section One

The purpose of section one is to obtain a self-description of one of the respondents most successful on the job experiences.

Section one is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Section Two

The purpose of section two is to ask respondents to classify the successful experience described in section one into one of three achievement domains: intrapersonal achievement - response a; interpersonal achievement - response b; mastery or control - response c.

Section two is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Section Three

The purpose of section three is to assess the relative importance that respondents perceive each of the following four factors: ability, effort, luck, and task ease, played in the successful experience reported in section one.

Section three is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please include any additional comments concerning the content validity of the Causal Attribution Scale Form (A) in the space below.



EVALUATION FORM

The following questions refer to the Causal Attribution Scale Form (B).

Section One

The purpose of section one is to obtain a self-description of one of the respondents least successful on the job experiences.

Section one is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Section Two

The purpose of section two is to ask respondents to classify the unsuccessful experience described in section one into one of three achievement domains: intrapersonal achievement - response a; interpersonal achievement - response b; mastery or control - response c.

Section two is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Section Three

The purpose of section three is to assess the relative importance that respondents perceive each of the following four factors: lack of ability, lack of effort, bad luck, and task difficulty, played in the unsuccessful experience reported in section one.

Section three is:

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate as is

\_\_\_\_\_ Adequate with the following changes: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate for the following reasons: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please include any additional comments concerning the content validity of the Causal Attribution Scale Form (B) in the space below.

## APPENDIX G

### ATTRIBUTION RESEARCHER'S EVALUATIONS OF THE ORIGINAL CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORMS A AND B

#### CASUAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM A

##### Section One

- Researcher 1 Adequate as is
- Researcher 2 Adequate as is
- Researcher 3 Adequate as is  
This section seems fine as it is. You may, however, want to ask people (in this open-ended format) why they considered the performance a success.
- Researcher 4 Adequate as is
- Researcher 5 Inadequate for the following reasons:  
Doe not clearly differentiate between causal attributions and success standards.

##### Section Two

- Researcher 1 Adequate as is
- Researcher 2 Adequate as is  
Since you are asking for their experience of success in their present position as a counselor, I doubt if there will be many success experiences that are independent of other people or of projects or skills. However, I can't think of a better way to try and assess this area.
- Researcher 3 Adequate as is  
I prefer the above procedure to classify "type of success". It seems your three categories would be easy to recognize in an open-ended response; yet an open response format allows for more flexible responding and the categories can emerge from subjects. If these three alternatives are particularly interesting to you, vignettes could be constructed that describe a successful experience that involved one of these three sources.

Researcher 4 Adequate as is

Researcher 5 Inadequate for the following reasons:

### Section Three

Researcher 1 Adequate as is

Researcher 2 Adequate as is

Researcher 3 Adequate as is  
Again, these four assessments seem fine. The only comment I have results from Elig and Frieze (1979). These investigators point out that although these four factors are often used in attribution studies, the research situation itself should determine which factors are important. Thus, ability and difficulty might be especially relevant to counseling outcomes, but luck is not. Likewise, other factors not typically assessed might be important. Your familiarity with this performance domain should probably be the best indicator of how well these four factors capture this situation.

Researcher 4 Adequate as is  
I wonder about the relevance of "task difficulty/ease" as a cause. Is there some other type of external/stable factor that may be more generally relevant? Also, shouldn't ability also include personality traits?

Researcher 5 Adequate as is  
No clear theoretical rationale for these questions. What dimension are you trying to tap?

### CAUSAL ATTRIBUTION SCALE FORM B

#### Section One

Researcher 1 Adequate as is

Researcher 2 Adequate as is

Researcher 3 Adequate as is  
See comments Form A

Researcher 4 Adequate as is

Researcher 5 Inadequate for the following reasons:  
See comments Form A

Section Two

Researcher 1	Adequate as is
Researcher 2	Adequate as is See comments Form A
Researcher 3	Adequate as is See comments Form A
Researcher 4	Adequate as is
Researcher 5	Inadequate for the following reasons: See comments Form A

Section Three

Researcher 1	Adequate as is
Researcher 2	Adequate as is
Researcher 3	Adequate as is See comments Form A
Researcher 4	Adequate as is As in Form A, I think task difficulty has proved to be an elusive cause (Too closely related to perceptions of ability). You might want to look at the literature on free-response attributions to get ideas for alternative causes that can be classified as external/stable. Also, the more recent applications of Weiner's taxonomy place emphasis on a third dimension - controllability - which expands somewhat the number of causes looked at.
Researcher 5	Adequate as is

APPENDIX H  
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Please respond to the following questions.

1. What is your sex? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest educational degree you hold? Check one.  

☐ High School  
☐ Associate of Arts/Sciences  
☐ Bachelor's  
☐ Master's  
☐ Education Specialist  
☐ Doctorate  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Specify
4. Check the category which best describes your primary job responsibility. Check one.  

☐ Counselor  
☐ Supervisor/Consultant  
☐ Counselor Educator  
☐ Administrator  
☐ Research/Evaluation and  
Measurement Specialist  
☐ Student Personnel Work  
☐ Paraprofessional  
☐ Student  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Specify

## APPENDIX I

### LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear AMHCA Member:

I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida in Counselor Education and am currently gathering data for my doctoral research. I would like to ask you to participate in my study which concerns counselors' self-evaluations of performance and selected personal variables. I have been working with Dr. Gary Seiler, Outgoing President of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, who believes that the data from this research will be a contribution of knowledge to our growing field of Mental Health Counseling.

I need your help. It will take approximately 20 minutes for you to complete the enclosed forms. The Bem Sex Role Inventory and the Performance Self-Esteem Scale consists of adjectives to mark as directed on each form. The Causal Attribution Scale Forms A and B, requires two brief descriptions of two on-the-job experiences. The fourth form, the Demographic Information Questionnaire, requires answers to five personal information questions.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. No monetary compensation will be given. However, I will be happy to answer any questions you have concerning the study. All responses will be held in strict confidence. On no form are you requested to include your name. Instead, code numbers will be used in compiling the data.

Please read the individual instructions for each of these forms carefully and respond to all items to the best of your ability. Complete all items on all forms. When you have completed the forms, place them in the enclosed self-addresses stamped envelope and mail as soon as possible. Your participation in my study is greatly appreciated and I thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Mindy S. Hersh  
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures

APPENDIX J  
SUMMARY OF TABLES



Table 21

One-Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions  
for Counselors' Successful Performance Outcomes  
Not Significant by Sex Role Identities

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Ability	SRI	3	2.73192661	1.83
	Explained	3	2.73192661	
	Residual	123	61.36256158	
	TOTAL	126	64.09448819	
Interest in Task	SRI	3	2.27306578	1.98
	Explained	3	2.27306578	
	Residual	123	46.58407708	
	TOTAL	126	48.85714286	
Immediate Effort	SRI	3	2.03583065	0.90
	Explained	3	2.03583065	
	Residual	123	92.84605911	
	TOTAL	126	94.88188976	
Mood at Time of Task	SRI	3	12.56738490	2.21
	Explained	3	12.56738490	
	Residual	123	232.78694581	
	TOTAL	126	245.35433071	
Supervisor	SRI	3	5.48944006	1.90
	Explained	3	5.48944006	
	Residual	123	110.49375322	
	TOTAL	126	115.98319328	
Good Luck	SRI	3	3.71735085	1.13
	Explained	3	3.71735085	
	Residual	123	133.58423645	
	TOTAL	126	137.30158730	
Task Ease	SRI	3	0.85302161	0.91
	Explained	3	0.85302161	
	Residual	123	38.58004926	
	TOTAL	126	39.43307087	
Help From Others	SRI	3	10.30921472	1.88
	Explained	3	10.30921472	
	Residual	123	222.54792814	
	TOTAL	126	232.85714286	

Table 22

One Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions for  
Counselors' Successful Performance Outcomes  
Not Significant by Levels of Agentic Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Interest in Task	LASE	3	4.16449806	3.79
	Explained	3	4.16449806	
	Residual	123	44.69264480	
	TOTAL	126	48.85714286	
Immediate Effort	LASE	3	2.79043243	1.24
	Explained	3	2.79043243	
	Residual	123	92.09145733	
	TOTAL	126	94.88188976	
Mood at Time of Task	LASE	3	6.39927072	1.10
	Explained	3	6.39927072	
	Residual	123	238.95505999	
	TOTAL	126	245.35433071	
Supervisor	LASE	3	4.02703564	1.38
	Explained	3	4.02703564	
	Residual	123	111.95615764	
	TOTAL	126	115.98319328	
Good Luck	LASE	3	6.53720040	2.03
	Explained	3	6.53720040	
	Residual	123	130.76438690	
	TOTAL	126	137.30158730	
Task Ease	LASE	3	1.80240181	1.96
	Explained	3	1.80240181	
	Residual	123	37.63066905	
	TOTAL	126	39.43307087	
Help From Others	LASE	3	0.45137214	0.08
	Explained	3	0.45137214	
	Residual	123	232.40577072	
	TOTAL	126	232.85714286	

Table 23

One Way Analyses of Variance of Causal Attributions for  
Counselors' Unsuccessful Performance Outcomes  
Not Significant by Levels of Agent's Self-Esteem

Causal Attribution	Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	Sums of Squares	F-Ratio
Ability	LASE	3	10.49492081	2.47
	Explained	3	10.49492081	
	Residual	123	172.61619030	
	TOTAL	126	183.11111111	
Typical Effort	LASE	3	7.76133865	1.98
	Explained	3	7.76133865	
	Residual	123	159.73072484	
	Total	126	167.49206349	
Interest in Task	LASE	3	13.86368205	2.93
	Explained	3	13.86368205	
	Residual	123	194.18356205	
	TOTAL	126	208.04724409	
Mood at Time of Task	LASE	3	14.48916294	2.33
	Explained	3	14.48916294	
	Residual	123	254.84941974	
	TOTAL	126	269.33858268	
Supervisor	LASE	3	1.91336025	0.92
	Explained	3	1.91336025	
	Residual	123	80.96267281	
	TOTAL	126	82.87603306	
Bad Luck	LASE	3	1.33966506	0.64
	Explained	3	1.33966506	
	Residual	123	86.26663415	
	TOTAL	126	87.60629921	
Task Difficulty	LASE	3	8.26349971	1.40
	Explained	3	8.26349971	
	Residual	123	241.15382312	
	TOTAL	126	249.41732283	
Lack of Help From Others	LASE	3	5.18174372	0.77
	Explained	3	5.18174372	
	Residual	123	275.17539914	
	TOTAL	126	280.35714286	

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mindy S. Hersh was born in New York City on October 15, 1955, to Artie and Heny Hersh. Mindy attended the State University College of New York at Oneonta for three semesters then transferred to the State University of New York at Buffalo where she graduated from with a B.A. in psychology and sociology in 1975.


Mindy moved to Gainesville in 1976. She received a Master of Education and an Specialist in Education Degree from the Counselor Education Department of the University of Florida in 1978. Mindy then took the position of Supervisor of the New Life Center, a residential treatment facility in Ocala, Florida, which she held for almost two years. During this time, Mindy also returned to the Counselor Education Department as a part-time doctoral student.

Following six weeks of travelling in Europe, Mindy became a full-time doctoral student and accepted a part-time position as the Counselor for the Resource Center: Focus on Women, Santa Fe Community College in 1980. In 1981, she took the position of Associate Director of the Management Center, College of Business Administration, University of Florida. In 1982, Mindy accepted a full-time position with the Department of Conferences of the Division of Continuing Education also at the University of Florida.

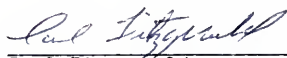
Mindy was active in establishing the local North Central Florida chapter of the American Society for Training and Development. She

currently serves as the President-Elect and 1983 Program Chairperson for this professional association.

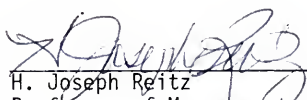
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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Roderick J. McDavis, Chairperson  
Professor of Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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Paul Fitzgerald  
Professor of Counselor Education

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of Counselor Education in the College of Education and to the Graduate School, and was accepted for partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

April, 1983

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Dean for Graduate Studies and Research

